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Koinonia

THE JOURNAL OF THE ANGLICAN & EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION

Editorial: For the Protection of Creation

THE ENVIRONMENT, carbon net zero by 2030 and religious appeals to politicians are all on our mind at the moment. Alarm bells are ringing and we are trying to understand whether pollution is a sin and how we can save each other and our planet. Should the poor suffer because they must, because our individualistic understanding of life dictates that our personal wealth is more important? Who is right in this discussion and most importantly who has the right to discuss and decide upon these issues?

For decades now, one religious leader has been discussing this crucial issue, creating initiatives and activities; seminars and symposia around the world; linking environment and spirituality. He is of course the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew, also known as the 'Green Patriarch'. Despite his very important and crucial work, he is not very well known in the West. His initiative has been followed by other religious leaders, including Pope Francis, with his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Recently we saw a first-ever joint statement by Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, warning of the urgency of environmental sustainability, its impact on poverty, and the importance of global cooperation. The full text of this ecumenical 'Joint Statement for the Protection of Creation' is included in this edition of *Koinonia*.

How unrealistic are all these goals? Do politicians even listen to the cries and initiatives established and promoted by the religious leaders around the world? Even if they do set targets, as did the Church of England's General Synod where it set a 2030 Net Zero carbon target, how could they actually enforce it? These questions seem important, especially since the world's engagement with the COP26 meeting in Glasgow and another attempt to ensure that countries around the world comply with environmental goals – with only mixed success. However, should we be pessimistic? Religious leaders and representatives were present in COP26 in large numbers. The Anglican Communion, for ex-

ample, was accredited as an Observer Non-Governmental Organisation to the UNFCCC. We do have a long way to go, but understanding the moral and religious implications of protecting the environment and promoting Eco-Theology to the world is crucial.

This theological approach to the environment as the care of God's Creation is the focus of this issue of *Koinonia* with contributions from both Anglican and Orthodox perspectives. The Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher (the Church of England's lead bishop on environmental matters) was present at COP26 and in his article 'The Scope of COP26' includes some direct reflections on the conference itself. Alongside this is an Orthodox perspective from John Chrysavgis, theological advisor to the ecumenical patriarch on environmental issues, entitled 'The Call of Creation'. This theme continues in the article 'Gratitude to all Creation' by the theologian Elizabeth Theokritoff. Together, we hope that these articles bring together insights, Anglican and Orthodox, eastern and western, as a significant contribution to the debate on theology and the environment. On a similar theme but a more practical note, the Anglican priest Jonathan Herbert reflects on his experience of direct environmental protest in St Paul's Cathedral and his subsequent removal and arrest.

However, this edition of *Koinonia* also includes contributions on different themes. As usual, we include the text of the Constantinople Lecture, 'The Voice of the Holy Spirit', by Carol Harrison, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford. There is an account of the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to Egypt written by our Chair, William Taylor who was present with him on that visit. The article 'Continuity, respect and change' by Dimitris Salapatas and Konstantinos Trimmis discusses the phenomenon of converting church buildings from other denominations (chiefly Anglican) to Orthodox liturgical use. Kirsty Borthwick and Theodora Mavridou reflect together from their respective Anglican and Orthodox experiences on their time at the ecumenical institute at Bossey. This edition concludes with a book review by Thomas Sharp about the life of Orthodox theologian Elisabeth Behr-Sigel. In this edition of *Koinonia* we are particularly pleased to have a number of articles by and about female theologians and clergy, as part of our desire to be more fully diverse and representative in a way that respects our different traditions. In large part, this has been facilitated by an expansion of the editorial team which currently includes five members whose names are listed on the inside back cover of this edition. In this way, we hope to bring a greater richness, depth and diversity to this journal.

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GRAHAM USHER is the Bishop of Norwich. As the Church of England's lead bishop for environmental matters he was present at COP26.

News and Notices

New Ecumenical Appointment

The Rt Rev'd Jonathan Baker, Bishop of Fulham, has been appointed as the Church of England's lead bishop for ecumenical relations with the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Annual Reception for Orthodox Leaders

The AECA held its annual reception for Orthodox Leaders at Westminster Abbey, beginning with Even-song and continuing in the Jerusalem Chamber. On the evening we were addressed by the AECA Chair, William



Taylor; Canon Jamie Hawkey, Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey; Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain; Bishop Jonathan Baker, Bishop of Fulham, and Bishop Graham Tomlin, Bishop of Kensington.

New Members of the Editorial Team

The editorial team of Koinonia has recently expanded and currently includes five members. Stephen Stavrou continues as Editor, along with Thomas Sharp, Thomas Mumford, David-John Williams and Hanna Lucas as Assistant Editors.

A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation¹

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW, POPE FRANCIS,
AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



FOR MORE than a year, we have all experienced the devastating effects of a global pandemic—all of us, whether poor or wealthy, weak or strong. Some were more protected or vulnerable than others, but the rapidly-spreading infection meant that we have depended on each other in our efforts to stay safe. We realised that, in facing this worldwide calamity, no one is safe until everyone is safe, that our actions really do affect one another, and that what we do today affects what happens tomorrow.

These are not new lessons, but we have had to face them anew. May we not waste this moment. We must decide what kind of world we want to leave to future generations. God mandates: 'Choose life, so that you and your children might live' (Dt 30:19). We must choose to live differently; we must choose life.

September is celebrated by many Christians as the Season of Creation, an opportunity to pray and care for God's creation. As world leaders prepare to meet in November at Glasgow to deliberate on the future of our planet, we pray for them and consider what the choices we must all make. Accordingly, as leaders of our Churches, we call on everyone, whatever their belief or world-view, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor,

¹ A joint statement issued 1st September 2021

examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.

The Importance of Sustainability

In our common Christian tradition, the Scriptures and the Saints provide illuminating perspectives for comprehending both the realities of the present and the promise of something larger than what we see in the moment. The concept of stewardship—of individual and collective responsibility for our God-given endowment—presents a vital starting-point for social, economic and environmental sustainability. In the New Testament, we read of the rich and foolish man who stores great wealth of grain while forgetting about his finite end (Lk 12.13–21). We learn of the prodigal son who takes his inheritance early, only to squander it and end up hungry (Lk 15.11–32). We are cautioned against adopting short term and seemingly inexpensive options of building on sand, instead of building on rock for our common home to withstand storms (Mt 7.24–27). These stories invite us to adopt a broader outlook and recognise our place in the extended story of humanity.

But we have taken the opposite direction. We have maximised our own interest at the expense of future generations. By concentrating on our wealth, we find that long-term assets, including the bounty of nature, are depleted for short-term advantage. Technology has unfolded new possibilities for progress but also for accumulating unrestrained wealth, and many of us behave in ways which demonstrate little concern for other people or the limits of the planet. Nature is resilient, yet delicate. We are already witnessing the consequences of our refusal to protect and preserve it (Gn 2.15). Now, in this moment, we have an opportunity to repent, to turn around in resolve, to head in the opposite direction. We must pursue generosity and fairness in the ways that we live, work and use money, instead of selfish gain.

The Impact on People Living with Poverty

The current climate crisis speaks volumes about who we are and how we view and treat God's creation. We stand before a harsh justice: biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and climate change are the inevitable consequences of our actions, since we have greedily consumed more of the earth's resources than the planet can endure. But we also face a profound injustice: the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on

the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them. We serve a God of justice, who delights in creation and creates every person in God's image, but also hears the cry of people who are poor. Accordingly, there is an innate call within us to respond with anguish when we see such devastating injustice.

Today, we are paying the price. The extreme weather and natural disasters of recent months reveal afresh to us with great force and at great human cost that climate change is not only a future challenge, but an immediate and urgent matter of survival. Widespread floods, fires and droughts threaten entire continents. Sea levels rise, forcing whole communities to relocate; cyclones devastate entire regions, ruining lives and livelihoods. Water has become scarce and food supplies insecure, causing conflict and displacement for millions of people. We have already seen this in places where people rely on small scale agricultural holdings. Today we see it in more industrialised countries where even sophisticated infrastructure cannot completely prevent extraordinary destruction.

Tomorrow could be worse. Today's children and teenagers will face catastrophic consequences unless we take responsibility now, as 'fellow workers with God' (Gn 2.4-7), to sustain our world. We frequently hear from young people who understand that their futures are under threat. For their sake, we must choose to eat, travel, spend, invest and live differently, thinking not only of immediate interest and gains but also of future benefits. We repent of our generation's sins. We stand alongside our younger sisters and brothers throughout the world in committed prayer and dedicated action for a future which corresponds ever more to the promises of God.

The Imperative of Cooperation

Over the course of the pandemic, we have learned how vulnerable we are. Our social systems frayed, and we found that we cannot control everything. We must acknowledge that the ways we use money and organize our societies have not benefited everyone. We find ourselves weak and anxious, submersed in a series of crises; health, environmental, food, economic and social, which are all deeply interconnected.

These crises present us with a choice. We are in a unique position either to address them with shortsightedness and profiteering or seize this as an opportunity for conversion and transformation. If we think of humanity as a family and work together towards a future based on the common good, we could

find ourselves living in a very different world. Together we can share a vision for life where everyone flourishes. Together we can choose to act with love, justice and mercy. Together we can walk towards a fairer and fulfilling society with those who are most vulnerable at the centre.

But this involves making changes. Each of us, individually, must take responsibility for the ways we use our resources. This path requires an ever-closer collaboration among all churches in their commitment to care for creation. Together, as communities, churches, cities and nations, we must change route and discover new ways of working together to break down the traditional barriers between peoples, to stop competing for resources and start collaborating.

To those with more far-reaching responsibilities—heading administrations, running companies, employing people or investing funds—we say: choose people-centred profits; make short-term sacrifices to safeguard all our futures; become leaders in the transition to just and sustainable economies. 'To whom much is given, much is required.' (Lk 12:48)

This is the first time that the three of us feel compelled to address together the urgency of environmental sustainability, its impact on persistent poverty, and the importance of global cooperation. Together, on behalf of our communities, we appeal to the heart and mind of every Christian, every believer and every person of good will. We pray for our leaders who will gather in Glasgow to decide the future of our planet and its people. Again, we recall Scripture: 'choose life, so that you and your children may live' (Dt 30:19). Choosing life means making sacrifices and exercising self-restraint.

All of us—whoever and wherever we are—can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation.

Caring for God's creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it.

The Voice of the Holy Spirit¹

CAROL HARRISON

Introduction

IN ST JOHN'S GOSPEL Mary Magdalene turns from peering into the tomb where Jesus had been laid, to find a figure standing next to her. He asks why she is weeping and who she is looking for. 'Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him', "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away'. Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'. She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni' (which means Teacher).' It is a moment of recognition; one which comes, not from seeing but from hearing. Mary hears Jesus say her name and recognises his voice. It is the voice of her Lord.

'Mary!'. Hearing her name Mary learns everything and nothing. Of course, she already knows her name, but hearing it enunciated with what must have been Jesus' particular tone of voice, it conveys more than words: she learns that her Lord is alive, is risen, and is present with her.

In this paper I would like to reflect on the ways in which the Holy Spirit is encountered and known in much the same way as Jesus' voice in this episode: through a distinctive tone or accent which effects recognition and response. In particular, I would like to focus on the way in which the speaking and hearing *of* the Spirit, or *in* the Spirit (we will see that the prepositions are important) unifies those who speak and those who hear.

As the breath of God, which brings creation into being, animates Adam and Eve, inspires the prophets and evangelists, and blows through the apostles at Pentecost; or as the voice of God, speaking through the prophets; preaching through the apostles; singing and praying in His Body, the Church, the Holy Spirit has traditionally been associated with the act of speaking and listening; with voice and hearing.

These are, of course, very human metaphors: it is we who need to breathe, to inhale and exhale, to speak in order to communicate and express ourselves through words and sound. But when we use them in reference to God it is important to acknowledge that they are not simply metaphors or mere

¹ Delivered as the 2021 AECA Constantinople Lecture, 26th Nov 2021 at St Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral, London.

human actions; rather that they originate in God and are only possible because God has inspired them. In other words, we must acknowledge that all is of grace: that it is God who is the source of our existence and our utterances – and most especially, that this is what it is to speak and hear in the Spirit.

To those with ears to hear I'm doubtless already starting to sound very Augustinian – and immediately, a host of questions arise. They are the ones that have long plagued theological reflection on grace: what is due to God and what is due to human free will? What of human sinfulness, responsibility, effort and works? Is faith a gift or a reward? It should come as no surprise that it is precisely in these contexts that pneumatology – or reflection on the Holy Spirit – often comes to the fore, at least in Western theology.

I don't propose to tackle these questions directly – or the equally significant ones that arise in the context of Trinitarian theology, concerning the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in substance, will and action. However, by focussing on the voice of the Holy Spirit, and most especially on the unifying power of that voice, I hope I might address some of these perennial questions, at least implicitly and in practice (which I suspect is probably the best we can do anyway).

The obvious place to begin is where we began this paper, with St John's Gospel. Here, anticipating his passion, Jesus promises that the Father will send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to teach and remind the disciples of everything he has taught them, to testify to Him and glorify Him.² And so, almost immediately after Mary's encounter with Jesus in the garden, John describes the risen Lord's appearance to the disciples: 'he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.³ Cyril of Alexandria comments on this passage that it is only through Christ's gift of the Spirit that the apostles were empowered to proclaim the Gospel, for without it: 'they would never have understood the mystery of Christ or been able to teach it perfectly unless the Spirit had enlightened them and revealed what exceeds human reason and prayer (and he quotes 1 Cor. 12:3) 'No one can say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit'.⁴ The account of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, recounted in Acts, similarly demonstrates that it is by the gift of the Holy Spirit – or in and through the Holy Spirit – that the disciples are able to address the crowds in voices they can understand: they heard 'a sound like the rush of a mighty wind

² e.g. John 14: 25-26; 15:26; 16:7

³ John 20:22

⁴ *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 12.1

... were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability'.⁵ This evoked the amazement and perplexity of people from every country and race, because they were able to hear the disciples speaking about God's deeds of power in their own languages. But it is not *glossolalia*:⁶ the Holy Spirit inspires the disciples to utter words they do not understand so that their hearers can comprehend what they hear. Unlike Babel, their hearers are united, rather than divided, by what they hear.

Early Christian theologians were unanimous in their belief that those works which eventually found a place in the canon of Scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit. As Gregory of Nyssa observes, 'Therefore the God-filled saints are inspired with the power of the Spirit, and the reason every scripture is said to be inspired by God, is that it is the teaching of the divine infusion of breath. If the bodily veil of the words is taken away, what remains is Sovereign and Life and Spirit, in accordance with great Paul and the Gospel saying. For Paul said that, for him who turns from the letter to the Spirit, what is apprehended is no longer the slavery that kills, but a Lord who is the lifegiving Spirit; and the sublime Gospel says, 'The words which I speak are Spirit and Life' (*Jn* 6.63), being stripped of their bodily veil.'⁷

Like the voices of the disciples at Pentecost, this meant that the authors of Scripture were believed to be unified and concordant in their witness to the truth, despite any apparent contradictions (and despite the fact that they might end up being heard to say more than they realised!). What we have described as a recognisable tone of voice becomes important here, for it is not so much *what* a particular writer has to say as the motivation and message they wish to convey *through* what they say: as Gregory puts it, it is the spirit, rather than the letter, that matters – and often, at least for early Christian writers, this meant interpreting a text figuratively or spiritually rather than literally.

The confidence of early Christian exegetes in expounding a text in this way was not only founded upon their belief in Holy Spirit's inspiration of Scripture; it was a confidence which was itself inspired by the Holy Spirit, enabling the teacher or preacher to discover and expound the truths or mysteries of the faith and enabling their reader or listener to take them to heart and act upon them. Early Christian exegesis therefore presents us with a polyphony of voices, harmonised and unified by the one Spirit who inspires the text, the

⁵ Acts 2:2-4

⁶ I Cor. 14:1-33

⁷ *Against Eunomius* 3.5.15-16

preacher and the congregation. Interpretations that were inimical to the faith, arbitrary or harmful, were avoided by what might be called a 'hermeneutical circle'; in other words, by the conviction that every interpretation must be inspired, taught, received and acted upon in and by the Spirit. Augustine characteristically identifies this action of the Spirit with love when he comments in his *On Christian Doctrine* (which was probably intended as a guide for exegetes and preachers), 'So anyone who thinks that he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbour, has not yet succeeded in understanding them. Anyone who derives from them an idea which is useful for supporting this love but fails to say what the writer demonstrably meant in the passage has not made a fatal error, and is certainly not a liar'.⁸ Indeed, when he later considers when it is appropriate to interpret a passage spiritually rather than literally he insists that if it does not, in its plain sense, communicate the double commandment, then it should be interpreted figuratively, so that it does.⁹ For Augustine, as for so many early Christian exegetes, the distinctive tone, timbre and accent of the voice of the Holy Spirit is the voice of love.

What we referred to as a 'hermeneutical circle', is, of course, not only the key to exegesis, but to the teaching or communication of Scripture. Observing that the Holy Spirit could, indeed, have simply inspired a person directly, inwardly, and without the need for a teacher or preacher, in the preface to his *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine stresses the fact that the very act of speaking and listening, of relating to another person and sharing the truths of the faith with them, actually effects what is being taught. If the one message of the Scriptures is love of God and neighbour, then the act of communicating it and sharing it with another is a way of uniting speaker and hearer in the very love they teach and learn. He therefore urges that 'there would be no way for love, which ties people together in the bonds of unity, to make souls overflow and as it were intermingle with each other, if human beings learned nothing from other humans'.¹⁰ Similarly, in another work on instructing beginners in the faith, he gives the example of sharing something we know well with someone who is unfamiliar with it, so that we encounter it afresh, through them, and are thereby united with them: 'For so great is the power of sympathy' he comments, 'that when people are affected by us as we speak and we by them as they

⁸ *On Christian Doctrine* 1.36.40

⁹ *Ibid* 3.10.14

¹⁰ *On Christian Doctrine* prologue 6, 8 Cf 3.16.333

learn, we dwell in one another and thus both they, as it were, speak in us what they hear, while we, after a fashion, learn in them what we teach'.¹¹ The bond which unites teacher and pupil, speaker and hearer so closely that they intermingle with each other, dwell in one other, and become one in speaking and listening, is again the voice of love, the Holy Spirit. And once again, it is not so much the precise wording of the text, or carefully chosen expressions, as the particular tone of voice – in this case, the voice of love – which conveys the truth and unites people in it.

But this may all sound rather vague and wooly: how can the truth be communicated, and souls united, by a tone of voice? In fact, it was a commonplace among the classical, rhetorical theorists, who taught the art of public speaking, and who shaped the mindset and practice of early Christian theologians, that one of the key factors of effective speech was what they called *pronuntiatio* – or pronunciation – in other words, the way the voice sounded; its pitch, volume, rhythm and tone, together with the bodily gestures (*actio*) which accompanied it, such as facial expressions or movement of the hands, fingers and arms.¹² In other words, they taught that words were inseparable from the body which sounded and enacted them. The link between words and the tone of voice in which they were communicated, was one that was self-evident to teachers of rhetoric, who thought that one of the key roles of the voice was to express emotion and evoke the desired emotion in the hearer, so as to convince, persuade and move them to act on what was said. As Cicero writes, 'For nature has assigned to every emotion a particular look and tone of voice and bearing of its own; and the whole of a person's frame and every look on his face and utterance of his voice are like the strings of a harp, and sound according as they are struck by each successive emotion. For the tones of the voice are keyed up like the strings of an instrument'.¹³ What classical rhetoric assigns to emotion, voice and gesture in effective speaking and hearing was just as self-evident to Christian teachers and preachers, but they were much more ambivalent about it. What we have called the 'voice of the Holy Spirit' or the voice of love, was not something that could be manufactured on the basis of theoretical instruction or careful practice, but something that was given. In fact, this is not so different from the rhetors, who, as we have seen in Cicero, tended to

¹¹ *On Teaching Beginners in the Faith* 12

¹² *Pronuntiatio* was the final, fifth stage, in the composition of a speech – e.g. Cicero *Ad Herennium* 1.2.3; Aristotle 1403b28–35

¹³ Cicero *De Oratore* 3.56.214–15

think that voice and action naturally sprang from particular emotions, without the need for artifice or conscious effort. But what was natural in a classical context was only natural in the sense that it was given by God, in a Christian context. When he turns to reflect on how the Christian preacher should communicate what he has found in Scripture in book 4 of *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine therefore urges the Christian 'orator' to be just that: an 'orator' – or one who prays – so that they might receive what they will deliver as a speaker or 'dicator' – for 'who', he observes, 'shall bring it about that we say what should be said through us and in the manner in which it should be said except Him, in whose 'hand are both we, and our words'?¹⁴ So, although he concedes that Christian preachers should indeed study and work to acquire rhetorical skills, when they come to preach they should remember Matthew's words: 'Take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you'.¹⁵

The image of the speaker in the hand of God, whose Spirit speaks in and through them, is redolent of Cicero's musical analogies, where the face and voice become like strings on a harp, moving as they are struck by different emotions; the Spirit, as it were, becomes a musician, playing through the human speaker. In fact this is an image which early Christian theologians revert to when they reflect on the role of that voice in which tone, pitch and timbre communicate just as much – or more than – the words: on song. The Holy Spirit is particularly associated with the non-verbal voice which expresses the inexpressible, whether this be the inarticulate groans of prayer – as in the well-known text from Paul: 'We know not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unutterable groans' (Romans 8:26-7), or in song – as in the less well-known passage from Paul: 'I will pray in the Spirit, and I will pray in the mind also. I will sing out in the Spirit and I will sing out in the mind also' (1Cor. 14:15). In his treatise *On Prayer*, Origen brings these two texts together and suggests that we cannot pray or sing without the Spirit, but only by joining our voices to His, as He intercedes for us with the Father or sings His praises. He writes: 'For our mind cannot pray unless the Spirit pray first, as it were within earshot, just as it cannot sing out with rhythm and melody and tempo and harmony, hymning the Father in Christ, unless the Spirit, which searches all things, even the depths of God, first gives praise and

¹⁴ *De Doctrina Christiana* 4.15.32 quoting Wisdom 7:16.

¹⁵ Ibid quoting Matthew 10:19-20

hymns him whose depths he has searched out and, as he is able, comprehended.¹⁶

Can the sound of singing indeed express what words cannot? In one of his commentaries on the Psalms, in a rare attempt to describe how we can continue to worship God when words fail us, Origen writes in a similar vein to his *On Prayer*, confirming that indeed it can:

Even if you do not know how you can give thanks to God in a worthy manner, you should still exult with the clear voice of a singing heart which soars above the signs of doubtful letters and express the mysterious and inexpressible despite the confusion of interpretations. If you soar above the sounds of words, if you keep within you the proclamation made with the mouth, if you can sing praise to God with just the spirit, your spirit, which does not know how to express its movements in words, because the word in you cannot carry the inexpressive and divine meaning of the Spirit- then you are singing to God¹⁷

Whether this is song which is sounded, or the inward song of the heart/spirit doesn't really matter; what matters is that our (inward or outward) voice, is able to express the inexpressible in song.

The power of song to unify those who sing together is often directly attributed to the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; it is not simply the music or performance, but the fact that it is in and through what Ambrose calls 'the Spirit musician', that is important. As he comments of the psalms: 'A psalm joins those with differences, unites those at odds and reconciles those who have been offended, for who will not concede to him with whom one sings to God in one voice? It is after all a great bond of unity for the full number of people to join in one chorus. The strings of the cithara differ, but create one harmony. The fingers of a musician often go astray among the strings though they are very few in number, but among the people the Spirit musician knows not how to err'¹⁸

Describing the unifying effect of singing the Psalms, Athanasius foreshadows Augustine's observations on the need for speaking and hearing so that human beings can be united with each other. In his *Letter to Marcellinus*, he

¹⁶ Origen *On Prayer* 4

¹⁷ *Commentary on the Psalms* fragment 80.1 6

¹⁸ Ambrose *Explanation of the Psalms* 1.9

urges that it is also necessary to sing, for like the exercise of teaching and learning, it both forms the inner harmony of the soul and expresses it. He writes: 'Therefore the Psalms are not recited with melodies because of a desire for pleasant sounds. Rather, this is a sure sign of the harmony of the soul's reflections. Indeed, the melodic reading is a symbol of the mind's well-ordered and undisturbed condition. Moreover, the praising of God in well-tuned cymbals and harp and ten-stringed instrument was again a figure and sign of the parts of the body coming into natural concord like harp strings, and of the thoughts of the soul becoming like cymbals, and then all of these being moved and living through the grand sound and through the command of the Spirit so that, as it is written, the man lives in the Spirit and mortifies the deeds of the body. For thus beautifully singing praises, he brings rhythm to his soul and leads it, so to speak, from disproportion to proportion'.¹⁹ Just as teaching and learning the Scriptures do not just communicate the double commandment, but effect it, so for Athanasius the singing of the psalms, odes and songs of Scripture, 'through the command of the Spirit' and 'in the Spirit', enables the singer to 'love God with their whole strength and power'.²⁰

As I try to draw the threads of this paper together, I should probably do what I didn't do at the beginning and come clean as an Augustinian – or rather, I might cite the first epistle of John (1 John 4:16) and then Augustine: 'Love is God, and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him'. Commenting on this passage in his *On the Trinity* Augustine identifies the Holy Spirit as the love which unites Father and Son, citing John again: 'In this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit' (1 John 4:13) he observes that, 'He [the Holy Spirit] then is the one meant when we read 'Love is God'. So it is God the Holy Spirit ...who fires man to the love of God and neighbour when he has been given to him, and he himself is love'.²¹ Then, effectively summarising his theology of grace, and identifying the Holy Spirit and love, he adds, 'Man has no capacity to love God except from God. That is why he says a little later, 'Let us love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). The apostle Paul also says, 'The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Romans 5:5)...So the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit; through him the charity of God is poured out in our hearts, and through it the whole triad

¹⁹ Athanasius *Letter to Marcellinus* 29

²⁰ Ibid 27

²¹ *On the Trinity* 15, 17:31

dwells in us'.²² In this context, everything we have discovered about the Holy Spirit as the voice of love, uniting those who speak or sing it, becomes entirely obvious. The miracle of speaking in tongues at Pentecost is no longer necessary; as Augustine comments, we simply need to look to our love of neighbour to know the Spirit's presence: 'If, then, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not now manifest through these miracles, what sign is given? How does a person come to know that he has received the Holy Spirit? Let him ask his own heart. If he loves his brother, then the Spirit of God dwells in him ... Let him see whether he finds in himself the love of peace and unity, the love of the church spread throughout the world'.²³

But why, then, in conclusion is the voice of love so inarticulate? Why did the disciples hear themselves uttering words they could not understand? Why does God use frail and fallible, human preachers and teachers? Why are the words of the authors of Scripture so diverse, disparate and sometimes contradictory? Why do we find ourselves groaning in prayer, or singing in praise? Why do lovers write poetry rather than prose?

The short answer is that we should not be trying to engage in an exercise such as this. We should not be talking *about* the Holy Spirit, but praying and singing *in* and *through* and *with* the Holy Spirit; we should not be attempting to describe what it means to say that the Spirit is love but to love God and neighbour in and through and with the Spirit. As Gregory Nazianzen puts it in his *Theological Orations*: 'It is only 'in' the Spirit that we can worship and through the Spirit that we are able to pray'. Hilary of Poitiers expresses this in the language of 'gift': just as the senses cannot operate unless there is something to sense; so our innate faculty of apprehending God requires the Gift of the Holy Spirit in order to know him.²⁴ That what we utter is often inarticulate should not surprise: we are not meant to be able to capture, define and teach the Trinity in articulate words; we are created in love, to love it; to be united with, purified, sanctified, sealed and reformed by that love. This is not so much a matter of words and definitions but of liturgy and worship. The reason the Spirit inspires Scripture, teaching, exegesis or song, is not so much to give us words as to breath into us that love, so that we, and those who pray and sing with us, might be united with it – for this is how we relate to and participate in the [transcendent and unknowable] God whom we cannot know or touch. Cit-

²² Ibid 15.18.32

²³ *Homily on the First Epistle of John* 6.10

²⁴ *On the Trinity* 2.35

ing 2 Corinthians 13:13: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all' Athanasius therefore observes that we cannot receive or participate in the gift of God's grace, love and fellowship, except through the inseparable operation of the One Trinity: 'When we participate in the Spirit, we have the grace of the Word and , in the Word, the love of the Father. Just as there is one grace of the Trinity, so too is the Trinity indivisible.'

Trinitarian theology has traditionally articulated these ideas through a consideration of those passages of Scripture which were held to demonstrate the inseparable substance and operation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; where God does all things *through* the Son and *in* the Holy Spirit; grace is received *from* the Father, *through* the Son and *in* the Holy Spirit, and baptism is performed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. These formulations and their prepositions can, as we know, divide the Churches. But what Athanasius is observing, and what I have tried to suggest in this paper, is that there is also a voice that can dispense with prepositions and does not need doctrinal or even doxological formulae to enable the believer to confess, worship and participate in the divine Trinity: it is to speak and hear in the grace, love and fellowship of God, as when the risen Christ simply says 'Mary', and Mary responds, 'Rabbouni'.

The Scope of COP26: Cop out or finding a way to cope? An Anglican perspective on Climate Change¹

GRAHAM USHER

WHY IS COP26 so important? Why did the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury write their first ever joint letter about the environment at this time? Why as Christians, do we believe that care for the environment is so important? And what are the hopes for COP26? These are the questions that I hope to explore in this lecture.

COP26 is happening in Glasgow at the beginning of November. For nearly three decades the United Nations has been bringing together almost every country on earth for global climate summits called COPs – which stands for the Conference of the Parties. This year is the 26th annual summit – giving it the name COP26. And why it is particularly important for the UK is that we are to hold the presidency, with MP and former Secretary of State for Business, Alok Sharma, in the chair.

There has been a huge run up in advance, delayed by a year due to Covid, with the UK working with every nation to reach agreement on how to tackle climate change. I have made a very small contribution to that by speaking from a faith perspective to other faith leaders, as part of a convening conversation organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through their ambassador network, and through an event at the Vatican bringing together the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, together with forty leaders from different faiths, to give a push to international efforts to have a positive COP26 result.

Approximately 190 world leaders are expected in Glasgow, together with tens of thousands of negotiators, government representatives, businesses, NGOs, activists and concerned people. It is likely to be a noisy space and how we hear each other will be important, especially the powerless, amongst them indigenous communities and small island nations. Our leaders hold the power to respond with urgency if they want to, just as they have with the covid pandemic, and to make the bold steps necessary to turn around this crisis. But there are many vested interests, and I suspect that the seven deadly sins will be much in evidence – pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth.

¹ An edited version of a lecture delivered at Norwich Cathedral, September 2021

Pride about maintaining a position, especially for an electorate at home, and not being willing to change;

Greed leading to the view to consume now and tomorrow will look after itself;

Wrath directed at those looking to hold governments, businesses and society to account;

Envy about different resources distributed around the world and their resulting exploitation;

Lust knowing that these huge UN events are often surrounded by the illegal trafficking of women for prostitution;

Gluttony at our insatiable appetite for growth at any cost;
and the *Sloth* of inertia to do nothing at all.

To understand why COP26 is important we need to look back and also look at the evidence right now.

First, let's look back at COP21 in Paris. For the first time ever something momentous happened: every country agreed to work together to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and aim for 1.5 degrees, to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate and to make money available to deliver these aims. The Paris Agreement was born. But we are not currently on track to deliver this. Every fraction of a degree warmer than 1.5 degrees leads to yet more human tragedy as many more lives are lost and livelihoods damaged, many more species become extinct and habitats degraded.

Under the Paris Agreement countries agreed to bring forward national plans setting out how they would reduce their emissions. They committed to bring updates every five years.

We do, however, tend to like to live with Gerald Manley Hopkins' view that 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil' but too often fail to read the lines that follow this:

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

The evidence that we have a worldwide problem is clear. We see it on our news. Heat waves this summer in Canada, extensive wildfires in many parts of Europe, cyclones, and increasing severe weather events are increasing warning signs.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, issued a report in August 2021 with the headline “code red”.² It is the most detailed assessment and showed the unprecedented change. It made five main points:

- Humans' role in the climate crisis is unequivocal;
- Every region on Earth is already affected
- Climate goals of limiting to a 1.5°C increase are slipping beyond reach:
- Changes to ice, oceans and sea levels are “irreversible for centuries”;
- Every bit of action matters – “there's still time to change”, says the report.

Another assessment of 37 countries,³ from the independent research group Climate Action Tracker, says that progress towards keeping hopes of the 1.5°C target alive have stalled since May 2021, with Gambia being the only country currently taking sufficient action.

It adds that the UK is the only developed country to have climate plans that are in line with efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. However, we don't yet have the policies in place to make our ambitious targets a reality, the scientists say.

What COP26 is aiming to achieve, in the face of all this evidence, is a fourfold ambition:

1. *Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.* Countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century. To deliver on these stretching targets, countries will need to:
 - a. accelerate the phase-out of coal
 - b. curtail deforestation
 - c. speed up the switch to electric vehicles
 - d. encourage investment in renewables.
2. *Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats.* The climate is already changing, and it will continue to change even as we reduce emissions, with devastating effects.

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021) *Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis*.

³ <https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/global-update-september-2021/>

3. *Mobilise finance.* To deliver on the first two goals, developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least \$100bn in climate finance per year.
4. *Work together to deliver.* We can only rise to the challenges of the climate crisis by working together and agree the Paris Rulebook.

In my homily at a service in St Denis' Cathedral in Paris to mark the start of COP21, surrounded by the tombs of France's dead kings and queens, I spoke about the story in Genesis of Hagar, a slave girl in the home of Abraham and Sarah, who is used as a surrogate and, pregnant with Ishmael, she incurs Sarah's jealousy and wrath, and is banished into the desert. God meets her when she is in a desperate state and asks her two questions; "where have you come from and where are you going?" (Genesis 16.8). Hagar can answer the first question, as we can with climate change, but in that desert of despair she can't begin to trace out and answer the second. It takes God to give her direction.

What direction, I wonder, might God be giving us at this time as we listen to God's voice through scripture and the inherited wisdom of earlier Christians?

"There are two different roads", wrote St Basil the Great in his commentary on Psalm 14, "one broad and easy, the other hard and narrow". He talked of there being a path of pleasure to be enjoyed now, and the path of salvation that promises a beautiful future. "The soul is confused and differs in its calculations", he wrote. "It prefers pleasure when it is looking at the present; it chooses virtue when its eye is on eternity". This is the heart of the challenge we face. What pleasures are we willing to give up in order to live with a lower carbon footprint?

In the first creation story in Genesis 1, we are not given a scientific or a historic account, but a profoundly theological text. When I'm reaching for words to describe something, the language of poetry can often be useful to enable me to understand myself as a person under God, alongside others, who share this common single island planet home, set within the marvellous creation that we encounter.

What I think is deeply beautiful about the first creation narrative is its repeated refrain, almost a congregational response to a priestly liturgy, 'And God saw that it was good', and then, at the end, when fish, birds, animals and

⁴ St Basil the Great. *Commentary on Psalm I*, 4, 5 (PG29, 22. 1ff.)

humans, and a rich variety of plants had been created, God looked around, he saw, and said 'it was VERY good'.

God sees it. God takes note of it. God values it. God delights in it. God affirms it. Then God rests. God hallows out a day to pause, so that that day might be a blessing.

We need to open our eyes and be captivated by the wonder of God's creation. When God gave people dominion over the fish, animals, and plants it can't have been the sort of lordship that dominated, abused, and selfishly exploited creation. Adam and Eve, all people, were and are to serve and conserve the earth that is extraordinarily strong, and it is also very fragile. To take note. To identify. To name. To wonder. To delight. To live in partnership. To let every breath praise the Lord, as the Psalmist puts it in Psalm 150.

We need world leadership that seeks to lead responsibly, acting for the common good, challenging injustice, speaking up, rising to the moment, and looking beyond short-term interests to protect the future of the planet. Election managers will say that these aren't the messages for a mass election, but perhaps faith communities can bring influence to say these are the very things that the electorate need to hear, and which will shape a simpler, gentler living on the Earth.

The poetic words of Colossians 1.15-20 weave into them what may have formed a hymn from the hymnbook of the early Christians. The focus is also on taking note and seeing 'all things'. Everything is in view as far as the eye can see and beyond; flora, fauna, geology, wind and ocean currents, distant stars and furthest galaxies are wrapped in Christ. The prepositions stand out – 'in', 'through', 'for', 'before', 'together', 'to' – all giving emphasis to the web of connection. Everything is connected in Christ and through Christ to all dimensions of creation.

The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. Jesus noticed, he saw, imagined, and told stories. So must we. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it. The invitation is laid before us to live simpler and humbler so that others, especially the poorest, and the rest of creation may survive and thrive.

I wonder whether, noticing this web of connection, and seeing creation's loveliness, goodness and beauty, might just re-kindle the foundation for a life-affirming, world-affirming horizon for our relationship with creation, rather than the world-denying, world-denigrating, world-escaping approach that we are complicit in?

'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth' is one of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion. The purposes of God are not fulfilled if we are living unsustainably, dishonouring his good gifts in creation, and harming the earth and one another, especially the poor. Time and again we see that it is nearly always the poor who suffer when creation is not protected and sustained.

The image of the Church, living as the body of Christ, is helpful for this discussion. Christ keeps on touching the earth through the ongoing life and witness of the Church. Thus, as we live as his body, we must concern ourselves with doing the things Jesus does. Care for those on the edge, and bringing healing, justice and freedom for all, each contribute to having an environmental concern, seeking a better relationship with the world, and playing our part in mending the world. Being part of the body also teaches us about what it means to live in a community of mutuality. Where one part of the body hurts all are harmed.

Climate change knows no international borders and it is those who have not pumped carbon into the atmosphere who are most adversely affected. The global impact of climate induced community collapse, resulting in refugees, violence and war, is enormous. We are to listen and see, seek to understand, and share what we have in abundance, especially with those already living under distress.

Our action and engagement needs to be rooted in justice for humanity and the whole of creation. The Kingdom of God's thirst and hunger for righteousness should spill over into the decisions we make. In thinking through a theology of climate change, we need to hold close the dignity and intrinsic worth of every human being, made in the image of God, many of whom are suffering or will suffer, as a result of adverse climate impacts on their lives. But also, more widely, not forget that we share this single island planet home with the whole diversity of creation and are utterly dependant on it. Human flourishing depends upon nature flourishing. As a beekeeper, I know how dependant we are on these small insects for pollination. If bees die, we all die.

In February 2021, the *Burning Down the House*⁵ was jointly published by Tearfund and Youthscape. This report captured young Christians' attitudes towards climate change, faith, and the Church. It suggested that young people view climate activism as integral to their faith and frame it in terms of justice

⁵ Tearfund and Youthscape (2021) *Burning Down the House: How the Church could lose young people over climate inaction*.

for the poor. The report noted high levels of frustration with the Church's approach to climate change and suggested action is a priority, not merely because it is the right thing to do, but because not to do so might cause the Church to lose young Christians and our evangelism to this age group will be seen through as hollow. How might we integrate creation care into our visible living out of the Gospel?

As Christians we need to work at all levels. So, what are the signposts to the Kingdom that we might erect?

- Our taking action about the issues of our day wells out of our life or prayer, and the issues of our day form our prayer.
- Many communities have in recent months been holding Climate Sunday services to focus the mind and heart and soul on COP26.
- Others have been speaking out about the impact climate change has on those who have the least, sharing and amplifying stories from our sisters and brothers around the world, thus being advocates for the most vulnerable.
- Others are joining me in signing the Glasgow multi-faith declaration calling on governments to create a positive vision for the future which will include stopping burning fossil fuels, but also seeking cleaner air and water, reducing food waste, ensuring a just and equitable sharing of the earth's resources, and the protection of habitats.
- Others have been writing to MPs and the Prime Minister – they do take note.
- Others have made personal pledges to make a difference, like the 9,000 plus pledges that have been made in Norwich Cathedral during the visit of 'Dippy the Dinosaur' from the Natural History Museum.
- Others are walking, including the Young Christian Climate Network's pilgrimage relay of hope to Glasgow, led by young people, which set out from Cornwall during the G7 summit in June 2021.

And from this dialogue are coming other asks for COP26 from the faith communities, especially an end to the use of public money in subsidising fossil fuels and a campaign to provide new and additional sources of finance for climate-related loss and damage, so that after adverse climatic events economically poor countries can rebuild lives, livelihoods and infrastructure, enabling them to be more resilient and prepared in the future.

Going back to God's question to Hagar, "where are you going?"

There is always the temptation simply to despair. Perhaps our biggest task as Christians is to hold a lamp of hope-filled light, the Christ-light to lighten our path, and help the world to hear the cry of the poor and the groaning of creation. Then to re-capture the wonder of God and God's world, as the Psalmist's did in speaking of 'the heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.' Re-inspired by the wonder of creation and, with a thankful heart, we seek actions that give hope shape. If the Resurrection teaches us anything it is that hope can emerge from the darkest places of desolation where all is uncertain. The letter to the Romans (5.3-4) teaches that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces the hope that will not disappoint.

The world does change. As the Christian Climate Scientist, Katharine Hayhoe, pointed out in an interview in September 2021: "Two hundred years ago, a lot of people thought it was perfectly acceptable to base an entire economy on slave labour. One hundred years ago, a lot of people thought that women should be denied the right to vote. Forty years ago, people were smoking cigarettes on airplanes. But those things changed, and they didn't change simply because someone in power decided that they should. They changed because a lot of ordinary people committed an extraordinary amount of energy to demanding it. They used their voices, they shared their ideas, they lobbied their elected officials, and they made it happen. That's how change happened then, and that's how it will happen now."⁶

Inspired by words from Deuteronomy, Pope Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Justin, "appeal to the heart and mind of every Christian, every believer and every person of good will" in their recent letter to "choose life". They rightly say that that will "mean making sacrifices and exercising self-restraint".⁷

For me, responding to the climate and biodiversity emergency is not an optional interest for the ministry of the Church. Rather, it is an imperative for the mission of God's Church.

⁶ <https://religionandpolitics.org/2021/09/20/climate-scientist-katharine-hayhoes-faithful-quest-to-heal-a-divided-world/>

⁷ <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2021/09/ecumenical-patriarch-pope-and-archbishop-of-canterbury-call-for-the-protection-of-creation.aspx>

The Call of Creation¹

JOHN CHRYSSAVGIS

The Green Patriarch

FROM EVEN before his election and enthronement in 1991, I have been privileged to work closely with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and my ministry has essentially followed in his footsteps and shadow over the last three decades. Whether simply spending time with him at the Phanar or organising international events or accompanying him on official visits (such as the one that opens in Washington DC tomorrow), I am grateful for this journey with His All-Holiness. His ecumenical and ecological vision has inspired and shaped my own ministry.

In 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarchate—then through Bartholomew’s predecessor, Demetrios—issued an annual encyclical on September 1st, establishing that day as the Day of Prayer for the Natural Environment. September 1st was subsequently adopted by all Orthodox Churches in the ‘90s, by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches at the turn of the millennium, and by Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury in 2015, as the Day of Creation. Today, most of the Christian world celebrates the Season of Creation in September.

Patriarch Bartholomew’s conviction that creation care is a moral responsibility and that climate change is a result of human sin have been defining aspects of his message over the last twenty-five years. Nine international symposia, five educational seminars, and (to date) four focused summits established his reputation as the “green patriarch.” For thirty years he has persistently advocated the protection of God’s creation as a fundamental mandate of the Christian faith, fearlessly championed the importance of heeding and collaborating with science, and unabashedly proposed personal sacrifices as alternative solutions. His conviction and claim is that creation care is not merely a political, technological, or fashionable exercise; it is fundamentally a spiritual issue. So the current crisis will be resolved only by addressing the moral causes of climate change, and this is precisely why religion has a vital role to play.

¹ First delivered as a webinar for the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University, October 22, 2021

The Ecumenical Patriarch

But of course Bartholomew is more than just the Green Patriarch. He is the Ecumenical Patriarch. And beyond the importance of his title and the implication of his position for the global Orthodox Church, it reflects and reinforces the ecumenical dimension of the patriarch as a minister of dialogue and messenger of reconciliation.

And so the Ecumenical Patriarchate has tirelessly defended ecumenical encounter for over a century, serving as a founder of the World Council of Churches and directing its Faith and Order Commission. Ecumenism is in the DNA of the Phanar, and Patriarch Bartholomew has been a staunch patron of ecumenical relations—on the inter-Christian and on the inter-religious levels, above all with the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion—despite internal resistance and retaliation.

For instance, in 2013, he attended the inaugural mass of Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square, a spontaneous gesture signalling the first time that a leader of either church had ever participated in such an event. In 2014, the two prelates travelled to Jerusalem to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the historical visit there by their visionary predecessors Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, who had revived ecumenical relations between the two “sister churches” after five hundred years of complete estrangement.

Thus, in 2015, when Pope Francis issued his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, people were not entirely surprised that he singled out the exceptional example of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, but they may have been unaware that this was the first time a papal encyclical referred at all, let alone so prominently, to an Orthodox prelate. It was also the first time a papal encyclical was released jointly by Peter Cardinal Turkson (from the responsible Pontifical Council) and Metropolitan John of Pergamon (a senior Orthodox Hierarch). Communications between the Phanar and the Vatican during the lengthy drafting process demonstrated yet another aspect of ecumenical conversation in the search for common witness. Then in September 2017, Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis issued their first joint encyclical on the World Day of Prayer for Creation.

The close historical relations between the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury similarly resulted in collaboration on raising awareness about climate change but also other issues—more recently, human trafficking. In 2015, just after the release of *Laudato Si'*, Bartholomew and Justin Welby produced a joint statement on “climate change and moral responsibility”

focused on the landmark Lancet Report about the link between climate and health. Their statement underlined that our response to climate change will reduce human suffering and highlighted that humans are in a unique position to choose charity over greed and frugality over waste in our moral responsibility for our neighbour and our planet.

The Joint Statement

Efforts to produce the most recent joint statement by the three global Christian leaders began in late May 2021, when the Ecumenical Patriarch approached Pope Francis with a view to preparing a statement along with the Archbishop of Canterbury for release on September 1st.² All three prelates spontaneously agreed to publish what would be their first ever joint appeal, specifically targeting climate not so much—or not primarily, or at least not exclusively—in light of the forthcoming COP26 meeting of the United Nations in Glasgow, but with regard to the responsibility of all people of Christian faith and good will.

What was different about this joint statement was that it was not managed or dominated by one or another of the three parties involved. It is always tempting—and surely much simpler and smoother—to have one side draft the document for consideration and approval by the others. And trust me, church leaders normally like assuming control over such matters. In this case, all three churches drafted the document together, with leadership assumed by the Patriarchate on the first section, by Canterbury on the second, and by the Vatican on the third. What was paramount was that the emphasis should be on a collaborative effort—with the three official seals and respective signatures bookending the document.

The power of ecumenical dialogue lies in opening up beyond ourselves, our interests, and our persuasions. It is learning to speak the language of compassion and, above all, learning to give priority to service. And in this respect, creation care has a vital ecumenical dimension inasmuch as it brings us divided and insulated Christians—in a fragmented and partisan world—before a critic-

² In light of discussion among the panelists following the presentation of this paper, it would be helpful to note that the joint statement was considered parallel in addition to an inter-religious statement signed by faith leaders from all over the world on October 4, 2021, which was also signed by Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, and Archbishop Welby. However, these three leaders felt that a separate statement directly addressing their own constituents was important and imperative in order to address concerns among Christians in general, who questioned the association between theology and ecology.

al, common task that we are called to face together for the sake of future generations.

‘Gratitude to all the created world’: A voice for our times¹

ELIZABETH THEOKRITOFF

SUDDENLY EVERYONE, in the Church and (especially) the wider society, seems to be talking about environmental crisis and ‘climate emergency’. And not before time, we might say. But the heightened concern and particularly the atmosphere of panic carry their own risks. The big picture, including indeed the larger environmental picture, risks getting lost in the scramble to slow climate change and remediate its effects, all with minimum disruption to the way of life that the developed world has come to expect. It is widely taken for granted that humans will need to shape, adapt and manipulate nature ever more intensively – only this time, in order to undo damage caused by our earlier shaping, adaptation and manipulation. Most certainly, there have always been voices calling for a radical re-thinking of modern (industrial and commercial) assumptions about man's relationship to his natural environment; but they remain a minority.

Orthodox Christian writers frequently join these calls for a change of heart, a new vision that sees the rest of creation in relationship to its Creator, not simply as resources to service our own appetites. Yet especially in its more popular versions, the Orthodox response often echoes the secular, managerial way of thinking: our error is a failure to ‘care for creation’. The increasingly popular image of ‘man as priest of creation’ contributes a liturgical and doxological perspective that should give all creation a spiritual value and dignity; but in practice, the way this ‘priestly’ ministry is envisaged is often distinctly clerical. Certainly, it precludes abusive exploitation; but it does not necessarily encourage much profound humility before the faithful (non-human) fellow-servants of our common Creator which might have much to teach us.

There are exceptions to this pattern, certainly: Orthodox thinkers whose vision of creation and man's place in it is modelled on the Church as an interdependent body, a reality of synergy and *sobornost*. So I want to focus here

¹ This article is based on a talk entitled ‘A world of God's creatures’, given at the 7th International Conference on Metropolitan Anthony's legacy, Moscow, 13–15 September 2019. Many of the texts on which it draws are unpublished transcripts kindly supplied by Dr Elena Sadovnikova, and identified in footnotes as ‘Texts:’. These should be accessible at <https://antsur.ru/en/legacy/texts/>

on one of the most striking and radical of these, Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh (1914–2003). Though widely known as an eminent Christian apologist of the second half of the twentieth century, Metropolitan Anthony is almost never mentioned in connection with theology and ecology. Yet he brings to this subject a distinctive and compelling voice which we ignore at our peril at this time of critical decisions for the way we live on earth.

There are reasons why Metropolitan Anthony's contribution on this subject often goes unnoticed. Apart from the fact that his talks were given mainly to small audiences and most still remain unpublished, there is the fact that he was rarely talking explicitly about 'the environment'. This, however, is one of his great strengths: his thinking about the material world, non-human as well as human, is not tailored to the requirements of a topical 'issue' but forms an integral part of his total vision. Even in the few talks which are responding to the environmental crisis, he was largely developing lines of thinking that he had started exploring decades earlier. His theological approach to the non-human creation was well ahead of his time, and arguably still ahead of much modern eco-theology.

Less than two years before Metropolitan Anthony died, he gave a final series of talks published in English as *On the light that shineth in the darkness*, and aptly described as his 'spiritual testament'.² Reading these talks, one cannot but be awe-struck by the urgency, the intense effort with which he musters all his remaining strength to articulate what he believed to be most vital. And he keeps returning to the meaning of the Genesis story of the creation and fall of man, and in particular the two trees in the Garden of Eden. Following Sergei Bulgakov, he sees these events as 'meta-history'; but he has been impressed above all by the compassionate and serene view of St Irenaeus, discussed in an article by Olivier Clément, that eating of the forbidden tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, became in its turn a way for man to come to God, albeit by a more tortuous and difficult route.

As Metropolitan Anthony summarises it, 'God did not create a tree of death but a tree of search'. Having rejected the direct route to knowledge of God, mankind has to seek Him out by gleaning what we can of Him through His works. This route to knowing God that is not the direct way of 'total communion', but leads through 'an ever-deepening and increasing communion with the created world'. Characteristically, Metropolitan Anthony does not

² Peter Scorer, Preface: in Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, *On the light that shineth in the darkness* (MASF, no date).

explore Irenaeus' argument in detail. But he conveys very faithfully the saint's confidence that our own choice, even with its apparently tragic consequences, has become in God's hands a way of working our salvation. And he speaks of the 'amazement' and 'marvel' as we discover the created world in its depth. With typical truthfulness to the reality of human experience, he does not simply give platitudes about discovering 'harmony'; he also talks about ugliness and even horror, the reality that we are embroiled in a fallen world. And yet, as he would frequently repeat, there is that 'element of a beauty that is at the core even of things monstrous and horrible'.³ This was not cheap sentiment: often it was illustrated from the terrible years of the Second World War and the German occupation of Paris, or the Russian Revolution and its aftermath.

Clément's reading of Irenaeus affirms an approach to the world that had been a vital part of the Bishop's own life. The appreciation of the arts, the beauty of nature and scientific exploration are all ways of coming to know the Author of the works: 'Whatever we do, we are at the same time searching for the Lord'. Metropolitan Anthony would speak of the dramatic expansion in the sciences as an instance of 'the visible challenging us to search for the invisible'. Significantly, and unlike most Orthodox theologians who write about the material creation, Metropolitan Anthony's own background was in the natural sciences. Often he would use the scientific method itself as a paradigm for honesty before God and the way to grow in knowledge of Him. In approaching God, one has to be prepared to jettison a hypothesis, one's own picture of how things are or how God is, when it is shown to be too small, too constricting for the reality.⁴ It is not scepticism but faith, belief in reality (the reality of God, and of His creation) that gives us the freedom and daring to abandon our own constructs. By recognising that it is not our God but only our inadequate images of Him that are under threat, we find that, as Metropolitan Anthony puts it 'the discovery of the mystery [of the material world] by science is part of theology, the knowledge of God'.⁵

Part of the unique value of Metropolitan Anthony's approach almost certainly lies in what he himself says about his experience as a doctor: it taught him that we are in essence embodied creatures, that *our materiality matters*.⁶ Spirit can never be separated from bodies, just as study and understanding of

³ Texts: 'Beauty and matter in relation to God'. Byzantine and Patristic Society Conference, December 1994.

⁴ *Living Body of Christ* (MASF, 2008), 80-1; *Light that shineth*, 6.

⁵ Texts: 'God and the Cosmos'. Cambridge sermons, 11-2-1973

⁶ *Ibid.*

the physical world can never be separated from spiritual life. This allows him to breathe new life into scriptural images such as the Church as a *body* – our role of ‘members’ means that we function not only limbs or organs, but also as living cells.⁷ And this profound sympathy for *embodied* existence extends to all parts of the living world. Metropolitan Anthony also loved the image of *grafting* because it speaks of growth through loss, through brutal separation from all our familiar supports, through vulnerability: ‘wound to wound’.⁸ One could say that he anthropomorphises the grafted shoot; or better, perhaps, that he recognises a profound *homology* between the life of the embodied human and all other living things, as well as between physical life and the life of the Church body.

This sort of vision, this perception of recurring patterns in all God's work that betoken a common authorship, is one that theologians today will readily associate with St Maximus the Confessor. The profound influence of Maximus on Metropolitan Anthony is clear – especially the essential message of creatures' relatedness to God through the *logoi* implanted in them, an ever-deepening relationship such that ultimately God will be all in all.

Today St Maximus is increasingly popular, and rightly so, among scholars seeking to articulate a theology of creation. But Metropolitan Anthony is exploring these ideas in the early 1960s – thirty years before people seriously started gathering such ideas to formulate a theological response to the environmental crisis. It seems that he was profoundly impressed by the presentation of the Confessor's theology in H.U. von Balthasar's *Cosmic Liturgy*, the second edition of which had just come out in 1961.⁹ It is also interesting that in interpreting Maximus, Metropolitan Anthony makes the leap to speaking of the human role collectively as that of Christ, ‘the great high priest of the world’, long before the image of ‘man as priest of creation’ was popularised (principally by John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon). Today, however, ‘priestly’ imagery is typically developed in a rather different direction, within a narrative where the main focus is on human activity and responsibility. Metropolitan Anthony by contrast never does much with the ‘priest’ image, and indeed uses it very rarely. He never lets it dominate because he never lets man dominate when talking about creation. Certainly, he often talks about ‘belief in man’ – especially as a starting-point for dialogue with people who profess no belief in

⁷ *Living Body* 162, 104–5.

⁸ *Living Body* 16–18.

⁹ Texts: Lecture VIII 1961–62

God. But he has no difficulty combining this affirmation of the human as a being in the image of God with the intuition of the sciences, especially the bio-sciences, that the human being cannot be understood except as an integral part of the physical and biological world.

Of course, this recognition of man as inextricably part of the material world can take people in more than one direction. Some conclude from it that man is merely a highly adaptable animal, a cosmic accident that has done well for itself. For Metropolitan Anthony, however, it reinforces an intuition that no creature is ‘merely’ anything. The fact of *being* a creature means to be connected with its Creator in its deepest core, so that our creation in the image of God does not separate us from other creatures, but allows every creature to ‘recognise itself in us’.¹⁰ It is fully in the tradition of St Maximus to emphasise our connection with all other creatures as that which enables us ‘to be the guide and the link that will unite all things created to the spiritual world’ and to God Himself, so that God may be all in all.

‘Man as link’ is a central theme also for the best-known of Orthodox ecological theologians, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon. But the contrast between their approaches is clear in Metropolitan John’s lecture at the centennial conference on Metropolitan Anthony in London (2014), when he talked about Metropolitan Anthony’s thinking in relation to the ecological crisis and to his own favourite theme, ‘man as priest of creation’.¹¹ He is basing his remarks mainly on a 1991 talk of Metropolitan Anthony’s entitled ‘The vocation of man’,¹² which is atypical in that it is inspired directly by the ecological crisis. It is hard to believe that it was not also influenced to some degree, probably indirectly, by Zizioulas’ own seminal lectures on the subject at King’s College, London, some two years previously.¹³ Zizioulas applauds ‘some beautiful things’ that Metropolitan Anthony has to say about matter used sacramentally, as an expression of a ‘cosmic Christology’. But he clearly has reservations about what he sees as Metropolitan Anthony’s tendency ‘to be an idealist rather than an existentialist, preferring to stress the positive presence of God in the world’;

¹⁰ Texts: Making Peace With The Rest Of Creation. Saint Albans & Saint Sergius Fellowship Conference 1990

¹¹ Kelsey Cheshire (ed.), *The glory of God is a man fully alive* (Exeter: Metropolitan Anthony SF 2016), 24–44

¹² Metr. Anthony of Sourozh, *Encounter* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), 125–136.

¹³ Republished in Luke ben Tallon, ed., *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2011), 143–175.; and in John Chryssavgis and Nikolaos Apsroulis, ed., *John Zizioulas on Discerning an Ecological Ethos* (London etc.: T&T Clark, 2021), 93–132

to Zizioulas' mind, this 'minimises the seriousness of the ecological crisis' and the extent of 'human responsibility for the very survival of creation'. There is a major difference between the two Metropolitans as to how we picture and therefore experience the world we live in. For Zizioulas, the sanctification of all creation is kept firmly in its place as a calling, a potential that can be actualised only through the person (though he fully acknowledges the *natural* kinship between the human and other material creatures as essential to man's 'bridging' role).

Certainly, Metropolitan Anthony agrees about the *calling* of the material world. He quotes Semyon Frank as saying that Christianity is the only valid form of materialism, because it alone ascribes to matter not only a temporary existence but an ultimate destiny, a vocation which is eternal. As Metropolitan Anthony elaborates, the Incarnation thus means that 'the matter of this world, as God had created it, can be not only spirit-bearing but God-bearing, that it can unite itself to God himself and remain what it is, yet transformed and transfigured'.¹⁴ But he goes on to draw out of this what he calls 'a global theology of matter'¹⁵ – because the ultimate end is so closely mirrored in the very beginning. The world at its creation is 'a world in full communion of innocence with God and called to develop from innocence into the perfect communion of holiness'.¹⁶ But even though the development has been interrupted by man's failure, the innocence remains:

...matter [is] free to commune with God in a reciprocal relationship ... because it is sinless, it is not fallen; it has become a victim of the Fall of man. St Theodore of Studion ...says that the created world, as we know it now... is like a good horse ridden by a drunken rider. We are the drunken rider...¹⁷

For Metropolitan Anthony, this is the message we should draw from the miracles of Christ. What seems to humans 'marvellous' and 'miraculous' is in fact 'the supple, live, loving relationship' between God and all that He has made. It is creation *set free* from 'vanity' (Romans 8:20-21) and allowed to act

¹⁴ Texts: Conference, may be in Scotland, Metropolitan Anthony 34 in Britain = 1983? 'Christian View on the Nature of Faith and Matter'

¹⁵ Texts: 7 Feb 1986

¹⁶ Texts: Making Peace With The Rest Of Creation. Saint Albans & Saint Sergius Fellowship Conference 1990

¹⁷ 'Sacred Materialism in Christianity', in *The Experience of the Incarnation: The Body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: St Stephen's Press [1997]), 15

according to its true nature. Miracles are thus not ‘one-sided acts of power’ but ‘acts of obedience and joy’ on the part of the natural world because:

there is not an atom in this world, from the meanest speck of dust to the greatest star, which does not hold in its core, possess still in its depth... the thrill... of its coming into being, of its possessing infinite possibilities and of entering into the divine realm, so that it knows God, rejoices in Him.

That is why he can speak of a

capacity of the world to be in God and to have God within itself, [a] capacity of the matter of this world, of the substance of this world, leaving aside our souls and our spirit, [which] is the very condition of the Incarnation on the one hand, and of our belief in the sacraments on the other hand.¹⁸

Often he illustrates ‘our realistic conception of the sacraments’ with a description of the icon of Transfiguration by Theophan the Greek, in which

The rays that fall from Christ ... do something to everything they touch: ... every stone, the earth seems to be penetrated by them and responds by shining back with the same light, as though this light divine was awakening at the core of things, a response that made them glorious with the same light of God.¹⁹

The ‘capacity’ of the world for God does not mean that that the elements possess consciousness as we know it. Nevertheless, this is a world in and through which God acts, and indeed which has been shaped precisely *in order for* Him to act to act in it. This is very much the world of the Psalms, in which the Lord works in and through the forces of nature and nature responds to Him; and indeed the world of Christ’s miracles in the Gospels. So Metropolitan Anthony has reason to say that a sense of matter ‘created alert... such that it can live and rejoice in Him’ is true to ‘biblical theology and... the life and experience of the Church’.²⁰

¹⁸ ‘Body and Matter in Spiritual Life’, in A.M. Allchin, ed., *Sacrament and Image* (London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 2nd edition 1987). see also Texts: Shaking the Foundations 1963-64: Talk 9.

¹⁹ Texts: 2 January, 1979 [talk on the Creed]; cf. ‘Body and matter’, p. 45.

²⁰ ‘Body and Matter in Spiritual Life’, 39-40.

Many Orthodox writers today will look to the Eucharist as the model for our attitude to the material world; but on closer inspection, this often seems to mean the Eucharist *from the viewpoint of the celebrant*. Yet when Metropolitan Anthony appeals to *the experience of the Church* as testimony to the dignity of matter and its relationship to its Creator, he is clearly thinking of something considerably broader. Our experience in the Church is that God nourishes and teaches and heals us *through material things*, from daily food and the wonders of the natural world to God's healing power and sanctifying energies and His own presence conveyed to us through water and oil, bread and wine. It is our consistent personal experience that first of all matter brings *us* to God: 'this [eucharistic] bread can convey to us what we are not capable of receiving or reaching out by our own efforts'.²¹ Or to put it more precisely, 'it is God himself pouring into the material world that reaches us through our own materiality'.²² Only then can we respond by offering the world to God in thanksgiving.

Metropolitan Anthony likes to illustrate the same principle by quoting from the prayer for the blessing of a church bell: God is asked to grant that this bell, whenever it is sounded, should awaken the sleeping soul and regenerate those who hear it. It is not even a natural substance that is being blessed here, but a human artefact deliberately devised and crafted for a sacred purpose. Most theologians, when they are talking about sacraments in relation to the material world, emphasise this human contribution: matter is being worked and brought and offered by man to God. But Metropolitan Anthony firmly and repeatedly links sacraments with the 'material miracles' of Christ, acts of God in which nature hears and responds.

In one of his last talks, Metropolitan Anthony strives to express the depth of his vision of the Eucharist as an example of all creation moving to its fulfilment in God. It is a movement of innocent matter growing according to nature, cultivated and perhaps even brought to the church by a human who may have only a vague idea of what is taking place... and thus a fragment of creation is 'reintegrated into the unity of God'.²³

Once more, we see here *God at work* through material creatures – including largely oblivious humans going about the business of everyday life.

²¹ Texts: Effingham 1990 Bishop's concluding talk

²² Texts: 'On sacraments' V. 21 February 1986.

²³ *Light that shineth*

The other element in Metropolitan Anthony's attitude to matter comes from what one might call a profound delicacy, a courtesy towards our fellow creatures. This underlies his insistence that miracles and sacraments are not acts of magic. Mostly when preachers remind us that the sacraments are not acts of magic, they are thinking entirely of *human* reception of God's gifts; they mean that we cannot expect an automatic effect without our response and co-operation. Metropolitan Anthony applies the same principle to the 'matter' of the sacraments, by underlining the parallelism in the Divine Liturgy:

when a sacramental action is performed or takes place, indeed it is God who acts, but he does not act *upon* a world he has created, upon people, upon things, but together with them in an eschatological harmony and fulfilment.... This is why... we turn ourselves towards God and ask the Holy Spirit to come upon us and *upon these gifts*.²⁴

Given this remarkable vision of the capacities of matter 'in itself' – 'leaving aside our souls and our spirit' as he says in that wonderful throw-away line – where does man come in, beyond being the 'drunken rider' that introduces an unnatural chaos into God's creation? Certainly Metropolitan Anthony is *not* saying, as some 'deep ecologists' might, that nature would be fine if only humans would leave it alone. He *does* say on occasion that we humans are the obstacle to all creation being fulfilled as sacramental;²⁵ but the reason that we are able to be an obstacle is precisely that we are placed so as to function as a bridge, what Maximus calls a 'natural link'.

Metropolitan Anthony sees this 'connecting' role of man illustrated in the two creation stories in Genesis. One (Gen 2:7) underlines our biological continuity with all the rest of the material world, being made from dust or mud. The other (Gen 1:27) points to our affinity with God through being made in His image and likeness; this is manifested in our creativity, our ability to fashion and perfect. Metropolitan Anthony often comments on the importance of talking about God forming man *from dust*, not from 'the most perfect monkey'. This dust makes man 'akin to every single atom of materiality, all the elements of evolution'.²⁶

²⁴ Texts: 'Sacraments' II, 15 December 1981

²⁵ Texts: 'Making Peace With The Rest Of Creation'. Saint Albans & Saint Sergius Fellowship Conference 1990.

²⁶ Ibid.

Man's actual, physical kinship with *all* other creatures is fundamental to our understanding of the Incarnation as the movement in which *man and matter* receive the potential to be 'not only spirit-bearing but God-bearing'.²⁷ In Christ, the material world no less than man can recognise itself as it is called to be. Certainly, Metropolitan Anthony acknowledges that in the eschatological fulfilment, man has a key role to play. Very clearly drawing on Maximus, he will say that 'creatures cannot get there on their own, even though their logoi (seminal words) drive them in that direction'; the logoi function as a sort of DNA, 'an inner law of development'.²⁸ Man's role is to guide all creatures from innocence to holiness, as he says elsewhere.²⁹ But he also recognises more than most that the unique role of man in bringing all creation to fulfilment in God should not be contrasted with the supposed incapacity and inertia of all other creatures. It should be contrasted with the wrecking role that humans actually play much of the time, contemporary environmental destruction being only the latest example. Metropolitan Anthony does not neglect the exalted rôle in the destiny of the cosmos for which mankind was created: he is just aware, I think, how easily it can be used to congratulate ourselves on our lofty calling and avoid the reality that 'we are still in process of betraying our vocation day by day'.³⁰ That is why he focuses instead on the tragic irony of our situation; the gratitude we should have to all the created world, which 'can make us part-takers of the Divine life which it possesses as it were by right, and which *we* are incapable of soaring towards... and which *because* it is a victim can forgive as Christ forgave — and redeem us, even while we treat it in such monstrous, frightening manner'.³¹

All this gives us a very important perspective on the currently popular image of man as 'priest of creation'. As I have said, this is an image that Metropolitan Anthony uses only occasionally, usually because someone else has introduced that terminology. On the other hand, I would suggest that his outlook offers the best, perhaps the only framework within which this imagery can be rightly understood. The ancestry of the 'priest of creation' image is, basically, the cosmology of St Maximus meets eucharistic ecclesiology. And eucharistic ecclesiology is something that Metropolitan Anthony is quite crit-

²⁷ Texts: 2 January, 1979 [Talk on the Creed]

²⁸ Texts: Effingham 1990 Bishop's concluding talk

²⁹ 'Sacred Materialism in Christianity'

³⁰ Texts: 2 January, 1979 [Talk on the Creed]

³¹ Texts: Effingham 1990 Bishop's concluding talk

ical of, because he sees it as too much focussed on the celebrant.³² He often returns to the point that it is *God* who acts: the priest is 'instrumental'. 'He prays, but he prays in the name of the whole Church, the Body of Christ, and indeed, of the whole created world'.³³ This is obviously a radically sobornal vision of the Church, and so, by extension, of the world moving towards its ultimate goal. It is Christ, the great High Priest, who is always the celebrant. So when on occasion Metropolitan Anthony describes man's role as that of High Priest, this is not an extra accolade for man. It is a reminder that man brings the world to its fulfilment not by doing this or that with the world about him, but by growing into Christ:

... this bringing to God, into the full harmony of the divine kingdom, of all those beings to whom he is akin, does not begin when he acts as guide or as king of creation, ... it begins within himself when all that belongs to this created world in him as a microcosmos is ... dedicated to God, ... transformed and transfigured. The basic event is not activity, *it is being*, in that respect it is only by becoming holy that man can achieve his vocation.³⁴

At a time when 'urgency' and 'emergency' are the watchwords, such sentiments might be seen as at best counter-cultural, at worst a total irrelevance. I would suggest, however, that Metropolitan Anthony's words are as timely now as they were sixty years ago. For he goes on, 'We should handle things,... the most humble things, knowing that they belong to the substance of a world which is called to become....filled with divine presence;... [but] we can neither realise this nor fulfil it beyond the degree which we have already ourselves perceived, understood or achieved'.³⁵ What he cautions against is not action, but the arrogant assumption that our action is what transfigures the world. And this applies no less to the very necessary changes at all levels, from the personal to the societal to the global, called for by the present environmental crisis. Imminent threats may be averted, but enduring change will not happen without a change in our vision of our place in the world: 'analysing the elements of this world, ...overpowering them, and bringing them into a shape in accordance with the human mind... do not seem to lead to a world of complete

³² *Living Body*, 143-4.

³³ 'Sacred materialism', 15.

³⁴ Texts: Lecture VIII 1961-62

³⁵ *Ibid.*

harmony', as the Bishop mildly observes.³⁶ But it would be a mistake, albeit a very common one, to try to produce this change of vision by yet more discussion of the human vocation. It requires us to wake up to the nature of the world about us: to realise that we belong to a world of created things that 'are not inert to God, they sing the praise of God, they live by the word of God, they have a destiny in God; a day will come when we will see them in glory'.³⁷

In his talk at the 1990 Diocesan Conference which had the environmental crisis as its theme, we have seen already how Metropolitan Anthony strikingly looks to the power of all creation to 'forgive', even 'redeem' us from the consequences of our abuse of it. And he also expresses very clearly a hope that is all the more timely today:

God takes *final* responsibility for what will happen. And final responsibility means not only that He will be answerable for it, but He will *respond* to the tragedy by an act that will potentially put it right. And I say potentially, because it cannot be a one-sided act of God; it must be an act of God that is met by an act [on the part] of the creation.³⁸

³⁶ Texts: 'Chaos', 18 February 1976

³⁷ Texts: Effingham 1990 Bishop's concluding talk

³⁸ Ibid.

Arrest in the Cathedral

JONATHAN HERBERT



ON THE 13th Sunday after Trinity in the Anglican Cycle, I was arrested under the gleaming dome of St Paul's Cathedral by the City of London Police on the charge of Aggravated Trespass. The police showed me the courtesy of not handcuffing me and I was led away to the police van and spent a night in a police cell. I still feel slightly bemused how participating in an act of worship can lead to incarceration.

It began a few weeks earlier when some members of Christian Climate Action, an ecumenical group of several hundred Christians, were praying and thinking about how the Church of England might be encouraged to rapidly withdraw investments from fossil fuels. Science tells us that the burning of coal gas and oil has been a major cause of global warming, the effects of which are dramatically being played out each night in news bulletins. Sir David King, a



leading climate scientist, suggests that what we do over the next three or four years will be crucial for the survival of humanity and numerous other species. With the UK hosting COP26, we felt it would be good to arrange a symbolic action that might encourage Church of England investors to divest from fossil fuels. By agreeing to divest, the Church would be seen to be acting prophetically and might well set an example for others to follow.

On the day, sixteen of us met outside the Tate Modern Gallery, prayed together, crossed the Thames via the footbridge, and entered St Paul's Cathedral for the Sunday morning Eucharist. After the holy elements had been shared and the congregation returned to their seats, we calmly walked to the base of the dome, quietly unfurled two large banners, and an elderly member of our group ascended the pulpit to read out a short statement calling for divestment. When she finished, the congregation spontaneously applauded. The service concluded with a blessing and the clergy processed out. The Canon in Residence then came to talk to us under the dome where we stayed standing and asked us what our intentions were. We replied that we'd like to remain for the remaining 2 services of the day. There then followed some protracted negotiations with the Cathedral and the City of London Police. At 3pm we were

asked to leave the Cathedral. We declined, saying we wished to stay and pray. The police then gently and kindly began to arrest us.

Why was I prepared to be arrested? Simply, it was a response to prayer and a deepening sense of fear for the future. Like many of us (and, crucially, successive governments), I'd known about the Climate and Ecological Emergency for over thirty years, but little has been done to arrest our increasingly rapid journey towards climate disaster. I'd tried as an individual to live more simply. I'd become vegetarian thirty years ago. For the last 12 years as a member of the Hilfield Friary Community, an Anglican Franciscan community in Dorset, I have sought with others to model living a more sustainable life, after the pattern of St Francis. We live gently on and seek to conserve our 45 acres of land, offering hospitality and retreats with our earthy ecological spirituality. I'd personally been involved in insulating five of our buildings and installing a large biomass boiler, which now heats the Friary, burning very local timber. We even won a gold award from Eco-Church. But given the refusal of governments around the world and our own to face up to the ongoing crisis, I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to act, take to the streets and face arrest if necessary. Only strong leadership and action from government will allow the very necessary changes that need to happen to slow global warming. All the petitions I've signed and the countless lobbies I'd been on had produced little tangible result.

There's a strong tradition of civil disobedience and non-violent direct action in the Christian Tradition and in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. From the Book of Daniel, to Jesus' flouting Sabbath laws, overturning tables in the Temple and Jesus' followers going to prison in the Acts of the Apostles. St Paul, often quoted from Romans 13 to justify obedience to the laws of the land, himself was often imprisoned for his defiance of certain laws.

Having lived in two communities for the last 25 years, I know the importance of the disciplines of community life, called 'The Rule' in Benedictine Communities. Occasionally I've been very grateful to call the police to help remove somebody drunk and threatening violence against the community I live in. Boundaries are really important for all of us so we can feel physically, psychologically and spiritually safe. But just sometimes for the greater good I think it may be important for some people to break the law to bring about change. Not all laws deliver justice. Slavery was legal and justified theologically, as was apartheid. I am convinced, though, that any law breaking must be non-violent, and that for Christians it should be done after serious prayer and discernment, and with great humility.



One of the great inspirations on my Christian journey was the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, led by Dr Martin Luther King, which had at its heart both prayer and non-violence. Often civil rights protestors were beaten but always refused to resist violence with violence. In our own day, Christian members of Insulate Britain, obstructing the motorways to call on the government to reduce carbon emissions by insulating our housing, have been spat at dragged out of the road sometimes by their hair, verbally abused and castigated by the press, and face repeated court appearances fines and possible imprisonment. I think there's an echo of the Beatitudes in their witness: 'blessed are you when you suffer insults and persecution and calumnies of every kind for my sake.' Matt 5.11. It's uncomfortable and frightening to challenge government and powerful corporations, and even the Church, as countless Christians have done throughout history, but nobody in Christian Climate Action does so without carefully thinking things through. Christian Climate Action's more challenging actions are taken because of the existential threat we and all forms of life on our planet face, and come from people of mature faith acting out of conscience.

Perhaps we chose our Cathedral well with its proximity to the City of London, whose banks enable so much of the oil, coal and gas industry. As I was led out through the crypt of St Paul's, it felt like our actions were being hidden and suppressed, that we were an embarrassment and an inconvenience to the

Cathedral. However, to quote former Vice-President Al Gore, Climate Change like our faith is an 'inconvenient truth' that calls for a radical response.

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Egypt, October 6 to 11, 2021

WILLIAM TAYLOR



THE ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury paid an official visit to Egypt between 6th and 11th October, 2021.

The primary purpose of the visit was to celebrate the new Anglican Province of Alexandria (officially created on 20th May 2020, in the middle of the pandemic) as the 41st Province of the Anglican Communion, consisting of 4 Dioceses – Egypt, The Horn of Africa, North Africa and Gambella (in Ethiopia). It is geographically huge and covers 10 countries – Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Chad, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea, in a region which experiences the sharpest manifestations of twenty first century life – climate change (the Sahara increases its area of desertification), conflict over scarce resources (the water of the Nile) enforced people movement (the area has a huge number of displaced people and refugees), war (in Ethiopia) and jihadism. Though there are huge challenges, this new Anglican Province addresses them head on with faith and hope.



Given the regional challenges, increased co-operation between churches and religions is vital if religious bodies are to offer hope to the people they serve. Though it may seem odd at first sight for an Anglican province to take the name of an ancient Patriarchate (Alexandria), the reality in Egypt is that the name Alexandria as a descriptor of geographical Christian identity is already used and shared by the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Coptic Catholic Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury met all three Patriarchs during his visit – Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Patriarch Ibrahim Isaak Sidraki of the Coptic Catholic Church, and Pope and Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, Theodoros II. He was accompanied in the visits by Archbishop Sameh of Alexandria, a number of visiting Bishops, staff members and me as Chairman of AECA. All three visits were warm and fruitful, and issues of bilateral concern were discussed – exchange of students, exchange of librarians/scholars and the increasingly warm relations between Orthodox and Anglicans in the UK.

It is often said that the most useful moments in official meetings come “in the margins” and this was certainly my experience on the first day when the Archbishop went to the Monastery of St Makarios in the Wadi Natrun with a



very small group (no press etc.) for prayer and reflection. After spending some time in prayer in the various chapels of the monastery, the Archbishop had lunch with the monks and then a time of sharing spiritual insights of the monastic life of prayer. These were remarkably frank, open and moving, and the Archbishop was clearly energised by them.

Egypt is, of course, a majority Muslim country and meetings were also held with the Grand Imam and Grand Mufti of Egypt at Al Azhar, which focused on communicating a deradicalizing message to mainstream Muslims and the use of social media to do so. These conversations followed on from those which had already taken place in Rome, focusing on care for creation in a time of climate change and ecological crisis. This is a duty of stewardship and care on all faithful people.

This visit, the first archiepiscopal one since the pandemic, has been vitally important in restoring personal links between the leadership of Anglicans and Orthodox and building bridges for the future as we move from pandemic to endemic with all the subsequent challenges and opportunities this will bring as we pray with Our Lord that “all may be One.”

Continuity, respect and change: Exploring the Anglican to Orthodox lifeways of church buildings in London

DIMITRIS SALAPATAS AND KONSTANTINOS P. TRIMMIS

Introduction

CHURCH BUILDINGS, across the old world, have been developing during the two millennia of Christianity, from basilicas and simple rectangular buildings to the complex structures of the Middle Byzantine period and the Western Cathedrals. There are several changing cultural, social, architectural, and political scenarios of different periods that drive the development of the church architecture in East and West of Europe and from the Mediterranean to the Northernmost parts of Scandinavia, that are well documented to date by various authors¹ and a detailed presentation is beyond the scope of the present study. However, and as Kieckhefer in his 2004 volume records and annotates, church buildings also reflect the development of theology between denominations and practices.² This paper records and discusses on how the Eastern Orthodox theology and the Greek-Orthodox tradition have altered Anglican (mainly) and Catholic Apostolic church buildings in London in order to serve the needs of the growing Greek-Orthodox communities in the British capital. It is also assessing the impact that the Eastern traditions have had on Anglican church architecture and iconography and vice versa.

The development of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain and Orthodox Church buildings in London

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain was the first Archdiocese in the West, under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, established in London in 1922. The main reason that the Ecumenical Patri-

¹ See for example: Gaffney, S. 1952. Church architecture: a brief survey. *The Irish Monthly*, 80 (948), 236-242; Gkioles, N. 1992. *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία*. Αθήνα: Καρδαμίτσα.

² Kieckhefer, R. 2004. *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI:10.1093/0195154665.001.0001

archate established its first centre in Western Europe, in London and not in a different major European capital, can, to an extent, be explained by two reasons: (a) the prominent Greek-Orthodox community already established in London from the late 18th century and (b) the long-standing relations (unofficial and official) between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion since the 17th century.³

Anglicanism, since the Church of England's separation from Rome, has demonstrated a sporadic interest in the Orthodox, 'who had succeeded in retaining their catholicity without being papalist'.⁴ It was important for Anglicans to verify their existence through an ancient church, which was not Roman and papalist, and this could only be found in the Eastern Christian Church. Anglicans observed that the Orthodox Church had 'preserved the Creed, the Sacraments, the Hierarchy, and the life of Catholic devotion, in spite of the most protracted dangers and difficulties, without Roman addition and Protestant subtraction'.⁵ The 19th century saw a revival of an interest towards the Orthodox Church, which was sparked by the Oxford Movement, having as one of its objectives Christian reunion. Nevertheless, it was also facilitated by the Greek War of Independence that commenced in 1821 against the Ottoman Empire, resulting in the fleeing of countless Greeks to the West, mainly England. After the Great War, which brought West and East (in ecclesiastical terms) closer, we have the establishment in 1922 of the Metropolis⁶ of Thyateira and Great Britain in London, as an Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople making it the first Greek Orthodox Metropolis in the West where Germanos Strenopoulos was appointed as its first Metropolitan (1922-1951). This was, of course, achieved with the help and assistance of the Church of England bishops, especially the Archbishop of Canterbury. This ongoing cooperation has brought us to the current established and flourishing

³ For a general examination of Anglican-Orthodox Relations since the seventeenth century until today see: Salapatas, Dimitris, 'Anglican-Orthodox Relations: A Dead-End or a Way Forward?', *Koinonia, Journal of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, New Series No.63, Ascensiontide 2014, pp.15-31.

⁴ Zernov, Nicholas, Militza, *Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, A Historical Memoir*, (Oxford, Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1979), p. 1.

⁵ Moss, C.B., *Our debt to the Eastern Churches*, (London, Published for the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, 1935), p. 16.

⁶ The Archdiocese of Thyateira was initially the Metropolis of Central and Western Europe with its See in London. This later changed, since other Metropolises were born in Europe (Austria, Germany, France, Scandinavia and others). Finally the Archdiocese's jurisdiction is Britain and Ireland.

Archdiocese, which now numbers more than 125 churches, communities and monasteries.⁷

Out of these 125 churches, this paper will especially focus on the 24 churches that the Archdiocese manages and operates in London, and which serve mainly Ethnic Greek (Greek and Greek Cypriot) communities, but also Romanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Russians, Latvians, English, and other Eastern Orthodox cultural groups. From these 24 buildings, two are purpose-built by the Greek-Orthodox communities and are following typical post-Byzantine architectural norms. Since the 9th century AD, in the Byzantine Empire, church architecture has gradually evolved to accommodate the iconographic tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Theology. Such architectural conventions – that are standardised at the beginning of the 20th century in Greece – include the representation of the Virgin Mary Platytera at the apsis of the Sanctuary (where she intercedes the prayers of the living church towards her Son in the heavens), the depiction of Jesus Christ Pantocrator at the dome (representing the heavens), the four evangelists in the spherical triangles that the dome sits on, the prophets under the Pantocrator and so on.⁸ Equally the church also hosts either on wall paintings and/or on mobile icons the representations of numerous saints – traditionally following the conservative approach of the middle to late Byzantine iconographic tradition.⁹ The two buildings that have been purpose built – The Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom (St Sophia) in Bayswater and Ss Panteleimon and Paraskevi in Harrow – to a great extent follow these architectural conventions and iconographic practice. It is interesting to point out that despite the aforementioned facts, the iconostasis (templon) in the Cathedral of St Sophia follows a Western stylistic approach, but again this is based on post-Byzantine elements.

The 22 buildings that have been acquired by the Greek Orthodox communities, are not architecturally designed to follow such conventions. There is no dome for example for a Pantocrator or an apsis for The Mother of God (Platytera). Thus, the new users have to either revert to pre-9th century icono-

⁷ Please note, this number reflects the churches, communities and monasteries within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. There are more than 150 Orthodox Churches in the UK, including the other Orthodox jurisdictions.

⁸ See for example: Kalokyris, K. 1950. ΟυσΙΑ της Ορθοδόξου Αγιογραφίας, Athens: 23-24 or Fouteris, G. 2006 Εικονογραφικά Προγράμματα σε Βυζαντινούς Σταυρεπίστεγους Ναούς. Thessaloniki: Unpublished PhD Thesis

⁹ See a review at Herzfeld, M. 01990. Icons and Identity: Religious Orthodoxy and Social Practice in Rural Crete. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 63(3), 109-121. doi:10.2307/3317403

graphic styles, or to follow a simpler approach on expressing their theological thought throughout the church building; something that is typical of pre-20th century rural churches in Greece and Cyprus (eksoklissia – outside churches). To an extent, the presence of Greek Orthodox iconographic typicon in London equally impacts the Anglican tradition just as the Western art impacts the quite conservative post-Byzantine imported styles.

The characteristics of converted Greek Orthodox Churches in London

All 22 buildings in London have followed similar paths into their transformation from Western denomination churches to Greek Orthodox ones. The most important alteration of a building in order to be able to serve the Orthodox typicon is the erection of a templon or iconostasis and the presence of the altar. Iconostáses (or templon, -a in plural) have been constructed in the churches, with most of them having been bought and transferred from Greece and Cyprus. Additionally, mobile byzantine style icons and wall paintings have been commissioned to serve the needs of Orthodox spiritual expression. All previous elements that can find a place in the Orthodox typicon have been kept though, without a need for erasure of the past practices. Thus, pulpits, statues, western art wall paintings, icons, altars, and pews remain in use unmodified. Inscriptions related to the history of the buildings and any previous practice in them are also preserved and demonstrated.

The Orthodox Altar is freestanding in the Ierón (sanctum), the space behind the Iconostásis. In the majority of the converted church buildings in London, the old altars, that were following the Western tradition and were standing against the back wall, have been moved forward. Besides the practical aspect of the re-use of the old materials, there is also a spiritual feature that highlights the longevity of the holy space and enhances the lifeways of the buildings as churches even after the change of the user community. The preservation of previous art on the altars is evidence of the continuity of the sacred space and provides a sense of religious belonging in the host land.

Orthodox, Byzantine style, art has also been created for the buildings in the form of wall paintings and mobile icons. Wall-paintings in Greek Orthodox churches have been designed by a variety of artists in a range of techniques, all following post-Byzantine styles and forms. Decorating converted churches continues today. Notable is the case of St Demetrius in Edmonton. A church building, dating from 1909 and designed by E.L. Warre, was originally erected as the

Anglican church of St Martin to serve as a missionary parish in the Lower Edmonton area. The way that Greek Orthodox iconography is modified to be accommodated within an Anglican architecture is noteworthy as the iconography has to follow the neo-gothic architectural elements of the building. On the other hand, in other buildings, structural conversions are made for the iconography to be accommodated. A good example is the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God at Wood Green where an apsis has been built above the Sanctuary in order to accommodate a Platytera mosaic.

In the Orthodox churches in London, icons that are kept and venerated by the local Orthodox community to this day are also any pre-existing icons of pre-schism saints, prophets and angels. Two examples are an early 12th century fresco, possibly of St Michael's, at the Church of Christ the Saviour, Woolwich, and several icons in St Nicholas church at Shepherds Bush, created by the Anglican community but preserved now by the Orthodox, since they depict saints and prophets which are accepted by both East and West. Equally wherever there are statues in the churches, even if they are not part of the Greek Orthodox Tradition these are kept and showcased. Typical examples are statues at the Holy Cross church in Golders Green, the St Thomas' statue at St Nicholas, Shepherds Bush, and more. It is noteworthy to point out that the Church of St Nicholas was known as the Church of St Thomas, hence his statue on the bell tower. The local Orthodox Community now remembers this past by always having an icon of St Thomas in the Church, which people can venerate, showing respect to the history of the Church building and its Anglican past.

Discussion

The presence of the Orthodox Church in Great Britain has impacted Anglican thought, theology and practices. A great example of this is the understanding and acceptance of icons in Anglican Cathedrals. Iconography is an ancient tradition from the time of the ancient Church, retained today by many Christian denominations. Visiting ancient Cathedrals in Great Britain one can see the iconographic tradition and wealth which existed. Due to the Reformation, these practices were prevented from continuing. Christians in the West stopped praying and venerating icons. This became an 'alien' tradition. Interestingly enough this was a key point for closing down the first Greek Orthodox Church in London. Reading the history of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain we read:

The former church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Soho, founded in 1677, still stood. This had been built with contribution from (among others) the “Porphyrogenitos” James, Duke of York (later King James VII & II). However, a few years after its opening, it was closed partly on the insistence of Henry Compton, Anglican Bishop of London, who had forbidden the Greeks to have icons there and who had asked that they disowned various of their beliefs. When the Patriarch of Constantinople protested to the English Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, the latter replied that it was just as bad to have Romish beliefs professed in Greek as in Latin (!). The church was then handed over to the Huguenots, although it subsequently became an Anglican church under the title of St. Mary.¹⁰

Today, it is important to see how an Anglican hierarch (Rowan Williams) has shown great interest in icons, which is, in many respects, a very Orthodox theme. This interest of his, and due to his publications¹¹ – whereby he wishes to ‘help us ‘read’ what the icon ‘writes,’ whether it is written deliberately or by God’s providence’¹² – he is asked by many churches to ‘bless and dedicate an icon’;¹³ therefore, making him an Anglican specialist on icons. This is definitely a move away from past ideas and practices, which resulted in the closing down of the former Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

Equally, Anglican traditions are also having an impact on the Orthodox ways. This can be seen in Great Britain, in regards to iconography, whereby post-Byzantine, Western norms, appear in the modification of the churches to serve the Greek Orthodox tradition. The two most prominent examples are the templon (Iconostases) at St. Catherine in Barnet and in St. Sophia Cathedral in Bayswater. The first constructed in the late 20th century, when the latter

¹⁰ Gregorios, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, The Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain and Orthodoxy in the British Isles, <http://www.thyateira.org.uk/history-of-the-archdiocese/>, accessed 21/03/2020, 12.27.

¹¹ Williams, Rowan, *Ponder These Things – Praying with Icons of the Virgin*, (Norwich, The Canterbury Press, 2002). Williams, Rowan, *The Dwelling of the Light – Praying with Icons of Christ*, (Norwich, The Canterbury Press, 2003).

¹² Williams, Rowan, *Ponder These Things – Praying with Icons of the Virgin*, (Norwich, The Canterbury Press, 2002). p. xvii.

¹³ Williams, Interview, Appendix 2, p.17, in Salapatas, Dimitrios, Filippas, *The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius: Quest for Truth, Quest for Theology, Quest for Unity – An Exploration of Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Ecumenical Theological and Ecclesiological Relations from 1927 until 2012*, (University of Winchester, PhD, 2016).

had been built towards the latter part of the 19th century. Both are following the iconographic patterns of the Greek Orthodox tradition; however, the iconographic style diverts from the typical Byzantine tradition. Another example, again from Barnet is the regular use of the organ in the Orthodox services.

What we can take forward from the recording of the Greek Orthodox churches in London is the respect that the communities showed towards the Anglican heritage of the churches. And not just the religious and architectural respect but also the respect towards the communities that used the church buildings previously. The community's future secured the continuity of the religious spaces, avoiding the conversion or demolition of the churches. The continuousness is not just in regards to the use of spiritual spaces, but also in regards to the different aspects of material culture that the communities are using, mentioned earlier in this paper. Finally, the Orthodox typicon changes the spaces in order to accommodate the Eastern Orthodox traditions. These changes re-introduced to the British Isles aspects of iconography to the Western tradition, is something that is acknowledge not only by the Anglican church but also by Historic England, which lists them.¹⁴

Acknowledgments

This paper is part of the Thyateira project, which aims to record the history, buildings, tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets that are associated with the Orthodox communities which run under the aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The authors would like to thank His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain for his support and blessings, and all the clergy and community members who helped with the church visits during this difficult time, of the Covid-19 pandemic. Red River Archaeology and the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Bristol offered support with the building recording. This project has also been supported by Alperton Community School, NW London. Importantly, the project has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We thank all the above-mentioned people and bodies.

¹⁴ See the Historic England's listings of St Andrew Cathedral at Kentish Town and the listing of St Sophia's Cathedral at Bayswater.

KIRSTY BORTHWICK AND THEODORA MAVRIDOU



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ourselves and about the ecumenical task, through our shared ecumenical experience.

Theodora, perhaps you could start us off, by introducing yourself and sharing a favourite memory from your time at Bossey?

I am a graduate of the Theological Faculty in Thessaloniki and currently a PhD Candidate at the same Faculty specializing in Practical Theology and more precisely in Homiletics. During my Bachelor program we were introduced to the Ecumenical Movement and since then Ecumenism and Ecumenical Theology have been my focus.

Bossey is a place I have always wanted to visit and experience; besides the study program I wanted to experience sharing life with people from all over the world, coming from different cultural and traditional backgrounds. That is why one of my favourite moments and the greatest memory for me was, is and will be our mornings in chapel. Besides the fact that I had the chance to be part of prayers organized by people coming from different church traditions, starting our day all together was a true sign of our fraternity, a sign of accepting and be accepted by our brothers and sisters no matter our differences.

And Kirsty, why did you decide to study at Bossey? And what is your favourite memory?

I went to Bossey as part of my final year of ordination training in the Church of England (whilst, like you, finishing a PhD in Theology). I have been passionate about ecumenism for a number of years, but it was the opportunity to visit the Russian Orthodox Church in 2018 that sparked in me a particular interest for ecumenism at the international level. When I stumbled across Bossey, via word-of-mouth, I knew I had to find an opportunity to study there.

My favourite memories from our five months in Bossey are from the Christmas holidays, when many of us were unable to travel home because of Covid restrictions. It was whilst we were hiking in the Jura Mountains, celebrating New Year's Eve, and marking each other's Christmas traditions that I realised we had truly become family. Or, more to the point, we discovered the unshakeable truth that we were already family, in Christ.

Alongside much to celebrate, life at Bossey presented its challenges. Theodora, could you share something you found challenging about this particular ecumenical experience?

I would not say that small misunderstandings between us influenced our time there. For me, the biggest challenge we had to experience were the regulations taken by the Swiss authorities because of rising incidents of COVID-19. Un-

fortunately, a number of things that were planned for us (including a visit to Taizé, an ecumenical monastic community in France, and a visit to the Vatican and Rome) had to be cancelled and we came into the sad situation of having to stop our morning prayers in chapel - the only moment in our day when we were all together praying to our Mighty God to keep us, our families and the rest of the world safe and were offering our gratitude to Him. Nonetheless, I am grateful that our professors found a solution, that was safe for all of us and we were able to come together again.

And Kirsty, what about you? What did you find difficult?

The thing I found the hardest about my time at Bossey was not receiving the Eucharist. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the local Anglican congregations were not sharing in eucharistic services and so, whilst I was able to attend Roman Catholic and Orthodox celebrations of the Eucharist regularly, I was unable to receive the Sacrament. During my ordination training I had been receiving the Eucharist on a near daily basis, so I felt its absence strongly.

This loss did, however, have two unexpected consequences. First, it built in me an even deeper hunger for full communion with my fellow Christians and a deep gratitude for the kindness shown in allowing me to gather with others at their eucharistic celebrations; I could not receive the Sacrament but I felt no less welcome for that. Second, it gave me an unexpected sense of solidarity with those – including my friends at home – who were not receiving the Sacrament because of pandemic restrictions.

Part of our friendship has grown from a genuine interest in each other's traditions. Theodora, what have you learned about the Anglican tradition?

The Anglican tradition was not totally unknown to me. During my Masters program I had the chance to study the bilateral theological dialogues between the Orthodox and Anglicans and learn about the relation between these two traditions and to study their joint statements.

While meeting people from other traditions is also important to get to know how they live their own faith in practice. Talking with you I was particularly intrigued by the situation regarding the ordination of women. Knowing that you will be ordained and that you will be able to serve God from this position, I was happy for you. Nevertheless, I found it odd that your position will not be accepted by everyone in your church. That was information that I have to admit I never knew before and found it difficult to understand how his can



be possible within one tradition. It is a struggle that you might need to face and obey and overcome through prayer.

And Kirsty, what have you learned about Eastern Orthodoxy?

I too had some initial understanding of the Orthodox tradition, from my theological studies and from previous ecumenical encounter, not least with the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge who are part of the same ecumenical Cambridge Theological Federation as my own training institution, Westcott House.

What I gained in particular from my time at Bossey was the opportunity to form deep and long-lasting friendships with members of the Orthodox tradition, including you, Theodora. Through these friendships I have learned in particular about the diversity to be found in Orthodoxy, as its traditions have come into contact with the wide geography across which Orthodoxy has its roots. I also enjoyed learning about the breadth of the Eastern churches. We had a brilliant teaching session on ecclesiology from a member of the Assyrian church, and I learned about both the divisive and reconciliatory potential of our theological language as I encountered the ongoing ecumenical dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions.

Above all, in encounter with my Orthodox siblings I was struck by the pain with which they talked about the divisions between East and West. This

moved me greatly and has inspired in me a renewed passion for the healing of memories as a part of the ecumenical task.

And what about your own tradition? Theodora, has your experience at Bossey taught you anything new about your own church?

This is a difficult question that I ask myself every time I go back home after an ecumenical experience. I would say, that being a member of the Orthodox Church is a big responsibility and an honour as well. During my time in Bossey, I came to realize, that there were people who knew us only in name but without knowing what exactly Orthodoxy stands for. That is why those of us participating in ecumenical meetings need to know our tradition in depth, so that we will be able to explain it, but also show it to others. My goal was only to show the history and the spiritual richness of my Church not by arguing but by explaining and coming into dialogue. As far as the more personal moments are concerned, because of the reading that was necessary for our courses, I had the chance to rediscover and run back to the wise teachings and writings of our Holy Fathers, which were actually very healing in difficult times.

Kirsty, how about you? What have you learned anew about what it is to be Anglican?

I agree, it is so important to be grounded in your own tradition when engaging in ecumenical dialogue. I learned so much about what it is to be Anglican, and especially gained a richer understanding of what the Anglican Communion has in common with other traditions. As someone who is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England it was good to be reminded afresh of my tradition's rich Protestant heritage. At the same time, it was a joy to celebrate much that my own practices of faith share with the Catholic and Orthodox traditions; my love of iconography, my devotion to Mary, and the way my faith is shaped by the sacraments, for instance.

As a young Anglican theologian it was also wonderful hearing my Orthodox siblings talking about the riches of the Holy Tradition, and through that to be reminded that one of the gifts of the Anglican tradition is its own commitment to the study of the Patristics (in which my own research is based).

One of the delights of being a student at Bossey is coming away with friends who are also young Christians passionate about ecumenism. Theodora, what are your hopes, ecumenically, looking to the future?

My biggest hope is that we will be able to bring to our own countries the partnership and the understanding we experienced at the Ecumenical Institute in

Bossey. The challenges that our churches are facing are growing day by day. The goal for each of us individually should be to have the strength to provide, through our churches, our unconditional help to whoever needs it, simply by following our Lord Jesus Christ's example. All these challenges could be easier overcome, if we keep in mind that alone we might not be able to find solutions to our problems. If we set aside our differences and focus on everything that unites us and act together, we will be able to achieve more.

And Kirsty, what about you?

I'd love to see a greater emphasis given to more diverse voices in the ecumenical movement, especially young people and women – and especially lay women. I'm excited about the increasing emphasis on voices and movements from the majority world and how that might help my own church, the Church of England to engage with its colonial past.

But like you, I mostly hope for a deepening of friendships and an increasing willingness to overcome our differences. I have to believe that as we draw closer to one another we draw closer too to Christ, and thus help make visible the unity we already share in him.

Book Reviews

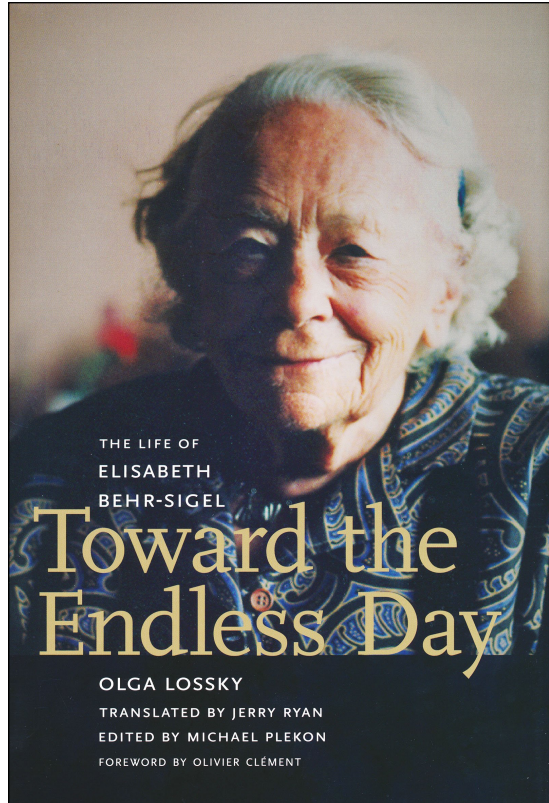
THOMAS SHARP

Olga Lossky, trans. Jerry Ryan, ed. Michael Plekon, *Towards the Endless Day: the life of Elisabeth Behr-Sigel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), originally published as *Vers le Jour Sans Déclin* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2007), pp. 380, £26.99.

IN HER biography of Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, Olga Lossky has achieved two remarkable things. First, a rich account of a life lived in the context of the flowering of the golden age of French Orthodoxy, years in which an occidental Orthodoxy looked to emerge with a liturgy and character distinct from the mother churches in the east.

Second, the sense of a very personal and spiritual introduction to one who was swept up in the traumas of the second world war, a challenging family life, and profound but complex personal relationships; who saw in all these things spiritual meaning and growth. In this, excerpts from Behr-Sigel's correspondence and the author's personal conversations with her subject are deployed to powerful effect.

Lossky paints a rich picture of Behr-Sigel's cosmopolitan upbringing in the Franco-German culture of Alsace and her Jewish-Lutheran family. This perhaps was the source of her natural inclination for building relationships



across cultural divides, most evident in her protestant theological training and ministry, then her introduction to Orthodoxy in the ecumenical context of the "Fedé" and of the Russian émigrés to Paris such as Bulgakov, Fedotov and Berdaiev. Behr-Sigel wrote, 'I went toward the Orthodox Church because I saw in it the Mother Church, where everyone could come together, in mutual recognition, without losing their own charisma.' (p.29). This vision of an 'ecumenical catholicism' (p.29) would be refined but not broken as the initial excitement of conversion faded. Her time in Berlin during Hitler's rise, as well as her Franco-German upbringing, enabled Elisabeth to see the outbreak of the war in a spiritual and theological context, in which 'Christianity seemed to have failed to implant its message of peace and love' (p.43); and Lossky's account of Elisabeth's flight to and life in occupied Nancy with her children reads like a thriller.

Lossky treats sensitively Behr-Sigel's marriage to the Russian André Behr. His illness, his alcoholism and his time away from the family are portrayed as opportunities for spiritual growth on the part of Elisabeth. It is a 'crucifying experience of kenosis' which prompts her to pray for, in Elisabeth's words, 'the only [virtue] that is totally inaccessible unless the Lord gives it: humility, not its mask but its reality.' (p.149). André's illness and early death also shaped Elisabeth's life as a theologian, forcing her into a composite ministry of teaching (to provide for her family) with church life and theological work alongside. In Lossky's account, the depth of Behr-Sigel's spiritual response to hard-times goes hand in hand with her practical (and at times heroic) care for her family. What we do not see in Lossky's account is any real chafing against the limitations this imposed on her theological and ecumenical work, and this element of the book can come across as a little idealised.

The most important relationship in Lossky's account of Elisabeth's life is that with the French convert Lev Gillet (later known as "the Monk of the Eastern Church"). A former Benedictine, Gillet's conversion was prompted in part by the hostile environment towards ecumenism at Rome, and the fertility of Orthodoxy for cultural exchange. Fr Lev is a constant spiritual companion for Elisabeth throughout the biography, though Lossky beautifully captures the challenges of that relationship. What begins as a hierarchical relationship must be negotiated into a friendship of equals. And whilst Fr Lev and Elisabeth grow to be stronger spiritual companions throughout their lives, Lossky portrays their relationship in the manner almost of a parable on the challenges of spiritual friendship. Elisabeth struggles (more or less successfully in the end) to free their friendship from her persistent clinginess, her need for love and companionship. And Fr Lev struggles (and ultimately fails) to free it from his fear of

commitment, his need for distance, and perhaps an unhealthy humility which holds him back. In Elisabeth's words at a particularly low moment, 'O poet, O miserable man who dreams instead of acts!' (p.223).

Lossky gives a rather briefer account of Behr-Sigel's theological work, focussing particularly on the debates about the ministry of women within the church into which she found herself (somewhat unwillingly) drawn as a spokesperson. Lossky writes, 'Even though she had not sought the "reputation as a feminist" that had been given her, as she often indicated in her talks, Elisabeth never hesitated to take a woman's point of view when that was called for.' (p.276). Particularly on the nature of prayer, Lossky's biography gives a strong sense of how Behr-Sigel lived what she wrote, and wrote what she lived, particularly concerning the use of the Jesus Prayer. However, although her theological works are lightly surveyed as they arise in the narrative, those seeking theological depth should pair the biography with one of Behr-Sigel's works on prayer.

At the end of her biography, Lossky is able to present the maturing of the ecumenical spirit, yearning to study and new relationships which had fired the young Elisabeth. Her speaking and her writing well into her nineties (after most of her famous contemporaries had died) had a calm, and a hope; and this despite perhaps her frustration at the lack of progress on the ministry of women, towards a dynamic ecumenism, and the establishing of a French occidental Orthodoxy. Lossky portrays a retirement-without-retiring, in which holidays with her extended family and theological work sit together as one fruit of her spiritual life. Lossky invites us into her own experience of Behr-Sigel's last years and, after she has put to bed the major themes of Elisabeth's life, movingly takes us with her to her deathbed and funeral vigil. Above all, Lossky's achievement is that she leaves us feeling that we have met a sister and a saint, and whispering an Alleluia as she lives 'in the glorious vision of the Risen Christ.' (p.299).

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Environmental protest at St Paul's Cathedral. Photo courtesy Jonathan Herbert.